

ACTON



MIDDLESEX



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Ms. B. 1. 1. 1.

With the author's kind regards,

Christmas 1913.

Wm. H. Baker,



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# ACTON

Middlesex

BY

W. KING BAKER.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

SECOND EDITION.

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"I suppose, beloved, there is not anybody who has a message that is worth listening to in the world whose message is not concerned in some way or other with the passing away of the former things."

Professor J. RENDEL HARRIS.

"For a people without a history, formed or forming, is what an individual is without a heart; the fountain of all nobleness and true greatness is wanting."

GEORGE LILLIE CRAIK.

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**ACTON**



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*Illustrations by Mr. F. C. Bursill.*

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## PREFACE.

Acton village has become absorbed in the heart of a modern suburban town. Its great houses have nearly all vanished; or, having fulfilled their appointed service, are giving place, one by one, in the presence of the demand for healthy sites and suitable homes. Those who, hundreds of years ago, erected those mansions, which until very recent times were characteristic of the place, may be credited with sound judgment in selecting excellent situations upon suitable soil with invigorating air and very pleasant surroundings. It is perhaps natural that there should be a desire for some memorial of the village, hoary with its prehistoric existence and its Saxon name—which lingered on into the recollection of those still living,—and that, in the midst of modern activities, the peoples of those former days should not be utterly forgotten. Within our own time rapid and extensive changes have come, and most of the ancient landmarks are disappearing, or have already been swept away. It has seemed desirable to collect such records, views, and particulars of the ancient history as were still available. The result is this volume, which, it is hoped, will give more complete narratives and descriptions than have previously appeared. Some accounts which have been frequently repeated in print do not find a place, because of inaccuracy disclosed by investigation. It will not be surprising if, in receiving particulars from many sources, some similar mistakes have crept into this work; and in gathering materials over a number of years it is quite possible some of my obligations to kind friends may have been overlooked, or may remain unacknowledged: if this should be so, I trust the oversight may be forgiven.

When this work was first suggested the Rev. Prebendary Harvey, M.A., formerly Rector of Acton, very kindly placed at my service an interesting account of the town's early history; Mr. Walter Adam Brown also put at my disposal the material of a lecture given on the occasion of the first town exhibition organised by the Acton Adult School; and to the Rev. G. S. De Saumarez, M.A., Rev. Wm. Bolton, M.A., Rev. C. E. Rivers, M.A., and other clergymen and ministers, to Mr. T. H. Morris, Mr. Henry Mitchell, Mr. R. O. Davies, J.P., Mr. E. F. Hunt, Mr. R. W. Harper, Mr. A. W. W. King, J.P., Miss F. Ouvry, Mr. S. Walker, Mr. W. J. Amherst, Mr. Councillor Crane, Captain C. T. Poore, the *Acton and Chiswick Gazette*, the *Acton Express*, the chairmen and officials of the County Council and of the Acton District Council, and to other friends I am indebted for kindly help or suggestions. When the copy was coming through the press, Mr. G. H. Monson very generously left with me for use an interesting chronological manuscript account of Acton events which I found of much value. To all of these, and to any who have helped, I wish to express my appreciation and thanks.

A few of the outstanding facts concerning the early days of Acton have been repeatedly stated in brief accounts, which have already appeared in narratives or the local press. Though this book is not confined to the strictly historical, the desire has been to present a true account from all available information. The time which the writer could give to its preparation was not, perhaps, sufficient for that exhaustive research of old records and contemporary writings which some, with greater leisure, might have undertaken. The book is, therefore, rather the collection of what has been known than wholly original material; although the reader will find much fresh matter. If, by this means, any awakened interest in our town should prove a stimulus toward loyal devotion to its development and improvement, its maintenance of high ideals, a broad charity amongst its inhabitants, and a pure moral standard of life, it will accomplish all that has been hoped or desired.

GASPEREAU,

ACTON, LONDON, 1912.

# ACTON, Middlesex.

## I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

MUCH of the early history of Acton clusters round and is associated with the old St. Mary's Parish Church, which stood in a commanding position in the centre of the ancient village. Upon the same site the frequently altered and re-built edifice has continued the chief landmark of the modern town, the castellated tower at the western end crowning the hill.

As will be seen from the group of views taken from the tower, the main thoroughfares through the town branch off in different directions from it.

In the first, looking to the north, will be seen the Rectory, a large square substantial building erected in 1725; while further northward the Horn Lane winds along beside the high wall, which, at the time the view was taken, enclosed the ancient Derwentwater grounds. Thence it passed near the Friar's Place Farm, and led to the old time village and Parish Church of "Wilsdon."

The second tower view is looking directly east. It shows Churchfield Road, along which the high buildings in the middle of the picture occupy the position where were formerly the Lammas or Churchfields; while in the distance, on the right, is seen the rising ground of Notting Hill, and on the left, the spire of St. Dunstan's rising out of the little hamlet of East Acton.

In the corner, at the left of this picture, stands what remained a few years ago of "Acton House," which, tradition said, was connected by a passage to the Priory; but no trace of any such passage was found when the house was pulled down and the excavations were made for the present substantial buildings and rows of shops which now occupy this site.

The third of the views from the top of the church tower looks toward the south, and gives some suggestion of the elevation of Acton above the level of the river. The ground begins rapidly to slope away down Church Road, but proceeds more gradually with the general descent until it reaches the river at a distance of about two miles.

In this view will be seen All Saints' Church, while near by on Church Road stands the first Public Hall that was erected in Acton, still bearing its old name of "Acton Hall." It has been the birthplace of some of the churches and many of the religious and philanthropic movements that have taken a more or less permanent place in the town. Far below, in the distance, is the dim outline of the river.

The fourth view is towards the west. It shows in the near right-hand corner the backs of a row of houses which once stood directly in front of the church, but were removed some years ago. The bend of the road indicates Acton Hill, and in the very centre of the picture is the residence long known as "The Woodlands." A row of shops now occupies the site. Adjoining the Woodlands Avenue, the "Oaks," another of the old residences, has shared the same fate, and become the site of the new Methodist Church, an imposing stone structure on Acton Hill.

Fortunately the beautifully wooded valley and hillside of the "Woodlands" grounds and garden have been preserved. The joint purchase by Acton District and the Middlesex County Council of the estate was barely in time to secure from destruction this beautiful relic of old Acton, with its fine selection of trees, planted hundreds of years ago. The grounds contain about six acres, four of which were acquired for the new County Secondary School and its playgrounds and gymnasium.



A View at Town Acton, Middlesex, by M. Hollogan. J. Hassell, sculpt.

Published 4 March, 1700.

The original in the British Museum shows that it evidently represents the High Road, across which the Stamford brook flowed at the foot of Acton Hill. Bank House is probably on the extreme left behind the tree.

The remainder was secured to the public, and made into a small park or garden. Further westward the road passes another old residence, "The Elms," and the site of "Springfield College," recently demolished; and leads on through Ealing Common to the town of Ealing. On the right, nearly opposite the common, once stood "Fordhook," formerly the residence of Fielding, to which further reference will be made.





Looking East.



Looking North.





Looking South.



Looking West.



Richard Baxter's second house in Acton.  
*Upjohn Copyright.*

not have been here that Baxter held his historical conventicles, it was until recently an interesting relic of old Acton. It was taken down in the year 1900. Probably it was Baxter's second residence in Acton, the first having stood at the other end of the Church.

The site of this second Baxter house is now occupied by the new branch of the London City and Midland Bank; while the new thoroughfare Crown Street, leading to the County School and Mill Hill Road, has necessitated the removal of more of these old buildings. Along the opposite side of the street, now an open space, formerly stood a row of shops, the illustration of which represents them shortly before their removal. At the far end of this row stood the old Invalid Kitchen, and just beyond this point was the enclosure for the detention of stray cattle, the Acton Pound. Some of the old inhabitants well remember this as still in use within their recollection.



Part of the Old High Street, now removed.

Taking a closer survey of the immediate surroundings of the Parish Church we have views of some of the old houses no longer in existence. One of the most interesting of these represents what tradition has pointed out during the past century as Richard Baxter's house—the nearest house shown in the illustration, with the old tiled roof and gabled end slightly projecting toward the street. The back part of this old building undoubtedly dated from the Stuart period. It was long used as a Bird Fancier's Shop and has been more than once the subject of illustration in the London illustrated papers. Although it may



Old Invalid Kitchen.

in the first of these cottages—that on the extreme left—Lady Derwentwater was once concealed. Here are a couple of remnants of the old trees which surrounded the little green that has recently been enclosed with an iron fence. The houses of Nelson Place, at the end of the little open space, stand upon the grounds of the old Bank House, once the residence of General Rous of Parliamentary fame. A small portion of the house wall is still visible.

Beyond the point where King Street joins the High Street or Uxbridge main road, at about the lowest point where the Stamford Brook crossed it, were erected the Acton Local Board offices, which, up to March, 1910, were used as the District Council Chamber and

Nearer by were the public Stocks, which stood at the Churchyard's southern gate, the site of the present London and South-Western Bank.

The clearing away of these old buildings effected a great improvement, leaving the front of the Church open and clear, besides affording a convenient triangle in the centre of the town. There still remain a few traces of these old cottages in the King's Yard.

Looking to the north over the rectory wall is seen another triangular block of cottages in a hollow which was formerly alongside an open water course running down Horn Lane. This is called The Steyne. An unlikely local tradition is that



The Ancient Steyne



General Offices. How inadequate they were was shown by the number of shops hired in different parts of the town to house the various departments of the Council's staff, while the Surveyor's offices had then to be transferred to a temporary building, upon the land adjoining the Public Baths.

Romance has been busy with the district immediately to the north of this very old part of Acton, not only weaving many a legend and passing on traditions associated with Derwentwater House—the famous old mansion until recently standing in its ample grounds and surrounded by a high brick wall—but also in connection with other houses in this neighbourhood. One of these, "Springfield," Mrs. Mary E. Shipley makes the scene of her tale of Old Acton called "Granny's Heroes."



Original Acton Local Board Buildings.

Old Actonians will readily recognise "the man with the broom," who in his day was quite a character, and well known to pedestrians along Horn Lane and Springfield Park. For many years he received the kindly contributions of passers-by.

Although the historical particulars of old Acton are not very abundant and some of the best authenticated of these have been made public, it may help toward a true estimate of what inheritance we have in this town of ours, if such facts and data as have been ascertained are put in more connected form. Although these may be generally accepted as correct, the writer has not been able by personal reference in all cases to verify the particulars given, or to trace these in every instance to original records and documents.



ACTON.

III.

Pre-Historic.







Palaeolith 10½ inches long.

the mind the prodigious growth of man from his early estate, and the gigantic task yet awaiting him in the elucidation of what prehistoric man really was. From the illimitable periods that preceded all that history has outlined, there may appear to us only dim shadows of man's origin, being, and development. Yet these faint traces are ever growing more distinct. As we open the pages of

WHEN one pauses a moment to reflect upon the fact, that, even in an age of education and civilisation as advanced as our own, there are but a limited number of persons who know their own ancestry farther back than a couple of generations, it will not seem surprising that we know definitely so little of the earlier ages of our race. Its study has in our time become a distinct science, and already it offers literature of its own. If its evidences are not all new, and are sometimes fragmentary, they are constantly accumulating, and their re-discovery is ever opening up to



Palaeoliths, Springfield Park (found 6 ft. below the surface).



Acton Palaeolith (British Museum).  
(Natural size:  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inches long.)

Divine revelation, given to and made through the instrumentality of man, what may be seeming contradiction (in the terms of our present apprehensions) and cause the materialist or the timid searcher after truth to exclaim, as of old, "How can these things be?" will, doubtless, in due season be demonstrated as reasonable according to the evidence, and will likewise disclose a larger and fuller vision of the Infinite Creator, whose unfoldings of truth and life have ever been well in advance of the human need.

The interesting collection of implements of the stone age found in our Acton gravels by Mr. F. Sadler, Engineer and Surveyor to the Acton Council, C.E., F.G.S., and an early interest which the writer also had in the collection of specimens, has resulted in the inclusion in this work of a few pages on pre-historic Acton. The writer is further indebted to Mr. Sadler for the following description of his discoveries made in our district:—

"There is abundant evidence that the neighbourhood of Acton has been inhabited for countless ages. The very earliest traces of man in the district are

the rudely chipped flint tools and weapons of the 'Old Stone Age' (that early period of human progress, when prehistoric man used implements of stone, the use of metals being unknown). These relics of man's handiwork are found, sometimes in considerable numbers, in the deposits of sand, loam and gravel which cover a large part of the district.

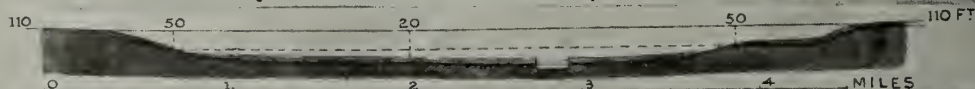
Reproduced photographs illustrate some implements found in Springfield Park, on an old land surface, more than 6ft. below the present level of the ground. It is almost impossible to realise the stupendous period of time that has elapsed since these rude tools of our pre-historic ancestors were made and cast aside. At that remote time a vast expanse of water—a swift flowing river—stretched across from North Acton to Richmond Hill. North of the river, the low lying land, covered with brushwood was a happy hunting ground for the mammoth and other wild animals which infested the district. From the fossil teeth and fragments of bones found in the river gravels it is evident that the hairy mammoth, woolly rhinoceros, grizzly bear, hippopotamus, cave lion, reindeer and other animals were contemporaneous with the men of the 'Old Stone Age.' Clad in the skins of animals, and living probably in hovels of brushwood, these men of the River Drift fabricated their implements of wood and stone and lived in constant warfare with the savage beasts. There is little doubt Palæolithic man lived in the district during the 'Great Ice Age' when most of the Northern part of Britain was covered with ice.

At times, the River, swollen by the streams of melting ice from the glaciers of

# SECTIONS OF THE THAMES VALLEY

showing terrace-gravels and deposits of implements and bones.

Fig. A. Section of Valley from Acton to Richmond. (Horizontal scale  $\frac{1}{2}$  of vertical)



High-terrace gravel, occupying the shoulders and sides of the valley at a height of 50 - 100 feet above ordnance datum.

Mid-terrace gravel in the bottom of the valley, 20 - 30 feet above O.D. In addition to these a low-terrace is found in the bends of the river, 10 - 20 feet high, containing bones of extinct animals and flint implements.

Fig. B. Section of High-terrace Gravel, showing spot where rolled as well as unrolled flint implements or flakes have been found: animal remains, however, very rare on this level. Surface 82 feet above O. D.

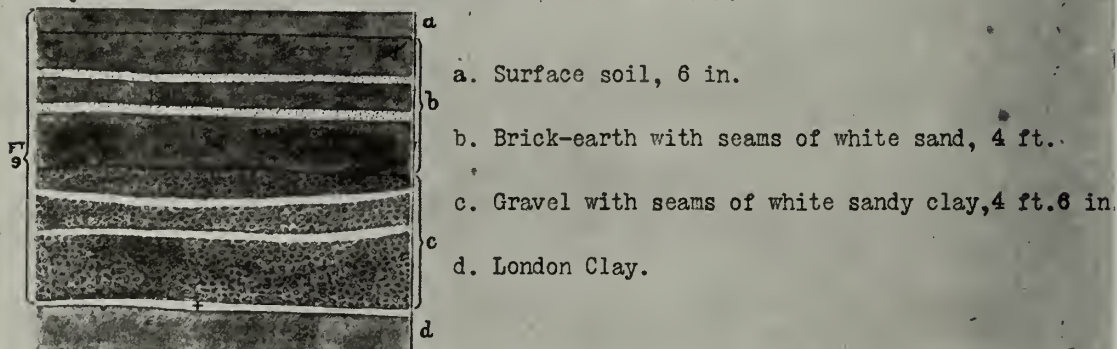
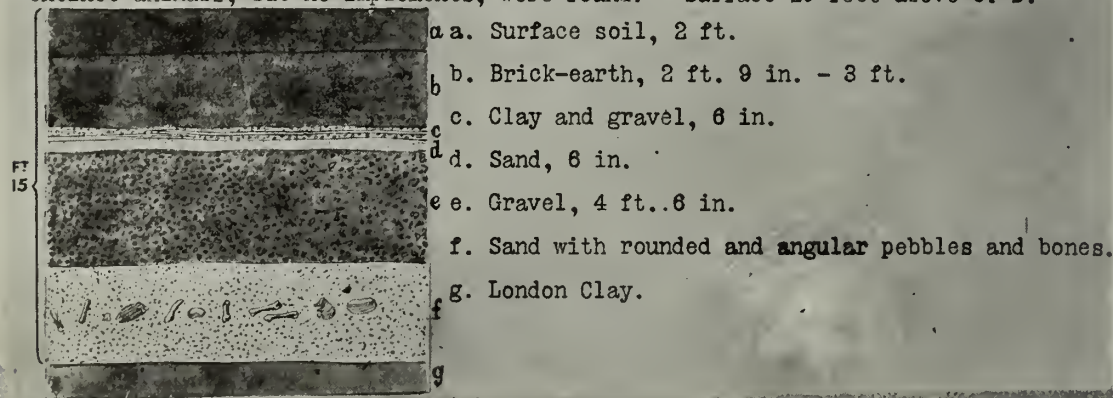


Fig. C. Section of Mid-terrace Gravel, showing the level at which many bones of extinct animals, but no implements, were found. - Surface 29 feet above O. D.



Pre-historic Implements and Bones, Acton to Richmond. (From the British Museum).

the North, would overflow its banks, driving away from their settlements these primitive people and covering with sand and shingle their tools and weapons, to lie for ages until unearthed by the workmen of the present day.



Since those bygone days what changes have taken place! The old inhabited land surface has been covered by river deposits, in some places to a depth of 15ft.; the river has worn its channel down until at the present time it is nearly 100ft. lower than in those old days; the huge mammals have disappeared from the neighbourhood, and many of them, including the hairy mammoth and woolly rhinoceros have become entirely extinct. When we remember how slowly these changes have been brought about by Nature, the River Thames having hardly varied its course or level during the historic period, what a vista of ages is revealed since man first inhabited the district.

The worked flints from these old river deposits present a variety of form and finish. The characteristic form is a pear or club shaped implement with a thick, often unworked butt, for grasping in the hand, tapering to a blunt point at the other end. Many of the implements exhibit considerable skilful workmanship, but the majority, although of somewhat similar form to the well shaped ones, are very much



Red Deer bones and antlers.

Mammoth bones, ivory and tooth.

Bison bones, horn, and molar teeth.

Found by Mr. George S. Baker, 1911.

ruder in workmanship. In addition to the pointed implements, a number show evidence of design for set purposes. There are implements which were clearly made for use as axes, choppers, and hammers. Flakes (struck off in the making of implements) were re-chipped for use as knives, spear-heads, scrapers, and borers. The chipped edges of many of the implements and flakes are almost as sharp as when first made or struck off, suggesting they were made on the site; some, however, show evidence of having been considerably battered and rolled in the bed of the river. Many of the implements are stained brown ochreous through the action of iron salts in the gravels in which they have been embedded.

In the year 1885, while excavations were being made for gravel on land adjoining the Haberdashers' Askes School in Creffield Road, over 500 implements and flakes were found within an area of thirty yards square at a depth of about six feet from the surface of the ground. This was evidently a 'workshop site,' where these tools and weapons had been made and abandoned, probably through



Neolithic Arrow-heads.

during the Neolithic or "New Stone Age" that the working of flint in the making of implements was brought to a fine art. The finely chipped arrow heads, the symmetrically ground and polished celts or axes, and the large variety of implements with evident utilitarian design, prove that the inhabitants of Acton in those days were of a very much higher scale of intelligence than in the Palaeolithic age.

Photos illustrate several Neolithic implements and arrow heads from the neighbourhood.

For many years it was assumed that, owing to the great difference in the form and character of Palaeolithic and Neolithic implements, a great gap separated the one age from the other; and that for some reasons, probably climatic changes, the Palaeolithic people were driven out of this country, and returned after an enormous lapse of time; but this gap is year by year being bridged by the finding of transitional forms of implements and by a clearer knowledge of the successive stages of the River Drifts in which implements are found. In the neighbourhood of Springfield Park, a foot or two below the present surface flint implements 'flakes' and 'cores,' the nucleus from which flakes have been struck, are to be found. From their form these are evidently of a later period than the Age of the river drift men and earlier than the Neolithic period, and probably represent the transitional stage. It was during the Neolithic Age that the 'barrows' or burial mounds were

flood waters. Implements have also been found in the gravels underlying Chaucer Road, Churchfield Road, Highlands Avenue, the Priory, Mill Hill Park, and all over the Springfield Park and Cumberland Park districts. They are found at different depths in the gravel, and it is clear from the finding of unrolled implements at different levels in the same gravel pits that the neighbourhood had been peopled at vastly different times during the palaeolithic age.!

Relics of Neolithic Man are much less common in the district than the evidences of his Palaeolithic forefathers. It was



Neolithic Celts found near Acton.



raised and towards the close of that era, the stone circles and other megalithics, usually ascribed to the Druids, were erected. Some years ago while workmen were excavating for the erection of houses in Mill Hill Park they unearthed several large bowls of coarse pottery. Fortunately they were preserved unbroken. They were examined by experts and found to be cinerary urns of the 'Bronze Age,' in which the men of that period used to place the ashes of their cremated dead. These urns which are of coarse brown pottery, rudely ornamented, are on exhibition at the British Museum, and by permission are reproduced. Like all the pottery of that period, they were hand made without the potter's wheel, and baked in an open fire. Other relics of the Bronze Age have been found locally. There is little doubt therefore that Acton was inhabited during the 'Bronze Age,' the period of human existence just prior to the dawn of the historic period."

Another interesting collection, the bones of extinct species of animals which inhabited this country during the Pliocene period of Tertiary times were recently found by the writer's brother, Mr. G. S. Baker, embedded in the marl and gravel laid bare by the erosion of the sea along the shores of Mersea Island, off the Essex Coast. The bones are those of the Mammoth, Red Deer and Bison. The mammoth bones, consist of leg bones and some small pieces of a tusk which has unfortunately, owing to its very splintery condition, been almost wholly washed by the waves out of its bed in the clay. The sections still show very plainly the grain and structure of the ivory.

There is a milk tooth of a young mammoth in a very fine state of preservation. To the left of these in the photograph are portions of antlers of a red deer of great size, that probably belonged to an extinct species; also cannon bones from the fore leg. The other bones are those of the bison, consisting of core horns and bones from the fore and hind legs and spine, also some molar teeth.



The Stone Age, early calculations.  
(By permission of Messrs. Felt Tarrant and Co.)

The deposits in which these bones have been found possibly may not correspond in age to those discovered in the brick-earths and gravel around London, at Ilford, Earls-Court, Acton, Twickenham, etc., in which the remains of mammoth, bison and several kinds of deer, bears, etc., have been found. The great forest bed which stretches from the coasts of Norfolk and Suffolk away under the North Sea over the Dogger Bank to the north and the coasts of Denmark, Germany and Holland to the east and south-east, at that time was a vast marshy plain with forests of alder, birch, pine and spruce on the higher ground, affording pasture for great herds of bison, elephants, several kinds of deer and an extinct species of horse; there were also numerous bears and other carnivorous animals, such as the cave lion, grizzly bear, probably the same as the grizzly in the Rocky Mountains, the brown bear, wolves, dog-like animals, and even the great sabre toothed tiger. It seems to have still survived though not holding the same position as it occupied during the Miocene period, his remains having been found in the Norwich Crag and even the forest bed. This animal was probably the most ferocious and blood-thirsty of his tribe. He seems to have killed his prey solely to drink their blood, as his enormous tusks would prevent him from eating anything solid. He seems to have preyed on the larger animals as the elephant, rhinoceros, etc., whose thick skins would be of slight protection against those terrible sickle shaped teeth.

It has been stated that vague indications of the presence of man in the Pliocene Age have been found in the way of flint implements of very rough workmanship but still showing marks of having been artificially worked; but hardly any authorities accept humanly worked flints as from the Pliocene period. An interesting discovery of a human skeleton near Ipswich is assigned to the Pre-Glacial Age and shows a high type of development, as per the following press extract:—

“As to the age of the prehistoric human skeleton found near Ipswich, Professor Keith, the anthropologist at the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, said:

‘There is every evidence that this man lived long before the glacial period. During this period England was covered with a great thickness of ice. Finally this melted and a layer of debris was deposited. It was underneath a deposit of this sort that the skeleton was found. Hence the man must have lived before the ice age and before the rivers were formed.

‘The finding of this skeleton strengthens the belief that the evolution of man was an infinitely longer process than we originally thought. At one time the believers in the evolution theory thought that man’s development to his present state might have taken something like 10,000 years. Later they put the period at something around 20,000 years. The differences, if any, between this man’s bony framework and modern man’s are so minute as to prove that evolution must have taken hundreds of thousands of years. This discovery shows that England was inhabited so early as, if not earlier, than any Continental country.’ ”

The increasing cold of the advancing glacial period had already begun to make itself felt at the time these beds of marl and gravel were laid down, and most of the tropical and sub-tropical plants such as palms, tree-ferns, sycas, bananas, etc., had disappeared. Also the crocodiles, tortoise and great lizards which were so abundantly found in the underlying London clay, had ceased to exist. The sea-shells were very similar to those found at the present day, and in the upper layers it showed the effect of the increasing cold by having many species which are now

only found on the coasts of Nova Zembla, Iceland and Greenland. As the cold period drew nearer the ice sheet advanced from the north. The bed of the North Sea seems to have sunk at this time to even a greater depth than at the present, and much of the eastern counties were under waves. The great icebergs came pushing south laden with mud and stones torn from the mountains of Scandinavia and dropped them in quantities, forming great banks in the sea which now remain as the Cromer Cliffs. It also pushed over the land, forming a sheet of great thickness, reaching as far south as Cambridge and parts of Suffolk, the enormous weight crushing the rocks underneath and pushing along with it vast quantities of gravel and stones, leaving a terminal moraine which can be traced for a long distance.

The mammoth, whose teeth appear in the photograph, was covered with a thick woolly coat which protected him from the cold as was also probably the case with

various species of rhinoceros, certainly in one species, whose frozen remains with the skin and hair still preserved have been found in the ice of some of the Siberian rivers, also in that of the Mackenzie river in Canada.

The mammoth seems to have been so well protected in this way that they were able to survive the intense cold of the glacial period or periods. Sir Archibald Geikie considers that "there are evidences of the climate having oscillated between periods of compara-



Cinerary Urns—late Bronze Age. Found at Mill Hill Park, Acton  
(Now in the British Museum.)

tive mildness and intense cold some eight times." The mammoth is undoubtedly contemporary with the human beings of a comparatively advanced type, as shown by the sketches of them on portions of their own tusks, and by sketches of reindeer carved on pieces of horn, and also reindeer carved out of solid horn, so that civilisation must have reached a comparatively advanced stage. The flint implements are frequently very nicely finished and occasionally polished.

It is clear that succeeding the Pliocene Age there was a glacial age; but it is by no means so clear what was the cause of this remarkable change of climate. Some years ago, the late Mr. Searle Wood, in discussing the subject, enumerated no fewer than seven theories which have met with more or less acceptance. These are:—

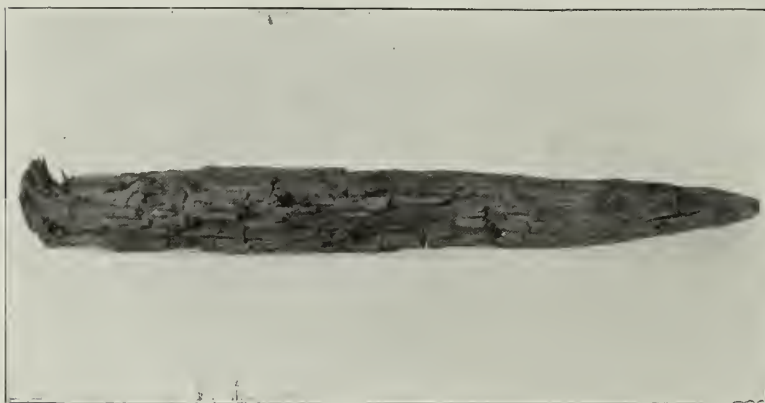


“(1) The gradual cooling of the earth from a condition of original incandescence; (2) changes in the obliquity of the ecliptic; (3) changes in the position of the earth's axis of rotation; (4) the effect of the precession of the equinoxes along with changes of the eccentricity of the earth's orbit; (5) variations in the amount of heat given off by the sun; (6) differences in the temperature of portions of space passed through by the earth; (7) differences in the distribution of land and water in connection with the flow of oceanic currents.”

The last is still clung to by some persons and there is certainly something in its favour, for, as observed by Sir W. Dawson, the ocean is a great equaliser of temperature due to the immense quantity of latent heat in water which is liberated as the water turns into ice. It also acts by way of its currents conveying the heat from the distant tropics to warm the icy cold waters at the pole. From this cause any change in the distribution of land and water which would affect the main ocean currents would have a very powerful effect on the climate of the regions which are now temperate; but this does not account for the glacial phenomena which are to

be seen in the continent of America where it could not be greatly affected by the ocean currents. The great ice sheets in this case seem to have reached far below the borders of the great lakes almost to the edge of the Mississippi Valley.

Interesting references to the pre-historic character of our neighbourhood will be found in the late Mr. John Allen Brown's



Ancient Roman Pile from the Thames at Brentford.

“Palaeolithic Man in North-West Middlesex” (Macmillan & Co.) to which the reader is referred. He says:—

“The beds of mid terrace brick earth on the low ground east of Acton are different in structure from those of the high terrace, and are clearly re-deposits of the same material. On approaching nearer to the river traces of the third terrace may be found, which are but slightly raised above the present stream. Looking at the difference between the level of the Thames and that of the high terrace of Ealing, very much more than 100 feet above where it now flows, well may Dr. Evans say:—‘Taking our stand on the high terrace at Ealing, Acton, or Highbury, and looking over the broad valley, four miles in width, with the river flowing through it at a depth of about 100 feet below its former bed, in which beneath our feet are relics of human art deposited at the same time as the gravels, which of us can picture to himself the lapse of time represented by the excavation of the valley on such a scale by a river, perhaps greater in volume than the Thames, but still draining the same tract of country.’

In the mid terrace deposits at Kew, Brentford, Acton Green, and Turnham Green, the following mammalia have been found and described by Mr. Trimmer,



Prof. Morris, Colonel Lane Fox, Mr. Belt and Mr. Layton :—*Bos Longifrons*, *Cervus elaphus* or Red Deer, *Cervus Clactonensis* or large Stag, *Cervus tarandus* or Reindeer, *Felis spelaea* or Cave Lion, *Ursus ferox* (*priscus*) or Grizzly Bear, *Elephas primigenius* or Mammoth, *Rhinoceros tichorhinus* or Woolly Rhinoceros, *Rhinoceros leptorhinus* or short-nosed ditto, *Hippopotamus major*, *Bison priscus* or Aurochs, *Equus caballus* or Wild Horse.

Their bones were little or not at all worn by attrition, and the long tusks of the elephants were found entire ; with them are associated many fluviatile shells of



Section of "Romano-British Occupation" Map (A.D. 50-450).  
(By permission of Montagu Sharpe, Esq.)

existing species. Many of the mammalia, such as the two species of Rhinoceros, the Mammoth, the Cave Lion, etc., are now extinct ; while others, such as the Reindeer have retired to more congenial regions in the far north. A flint knife was found south of Ealing Park, on the same spot as the bones of hippopotamus. The remains of the hairy Elephant and some other animals have been found in the high terrace gravel in and near London."

Of his discoveries of large numbers of palaeolithic implements in Acton, the late Mr. Brown also wrote :—

"The only conclusion which I think can be drawn from the assemblage of weapons, instruments and waste flakes found at the Creffield Road, is that they were made on the spot, and that we have here the site of a 'Palaeolithic workshop' as old as the upper part of the gravel itself. This becomes the more probable as large flints, some nearly a foot across, several of which have been worked upon, were found at the 6 foot level in No. 4 pit, which have a crust corresponding with that shown in the flakes. The oldest forms are not present among the specimens, and many of them are so much like neoliths that had I not known that they were found as I have described, they might very well be taken as a collection from Cissbury discoloured.

A remarkable feature of this kind is the large number of spear and javelin heads showing a double bulb of percussion, the one convex and the other concave. The first flake struck from the core must have been a single ridged one leaving the corresponding concave on the core. To produce the thin end of the weapon it was absolutely necessary to strike, as only by that means could the specimen be made and a double ridged flake be struck off with a thin end. The object is obvious, as this thin butt could be conveniently inserted into a slot in the shaft and secured by lashings of gut, a mode now, or recently, in vogue among savage peoples, such as the tribes of North Australia. These double bulbed flakes were then chipped to a point as is seen in these specimens."

Implements were also found by Colonel Lane Fox (now Gen. Pitt Rivers) as well as flakes remarkable for the sharpness of their edges in high terrace ground north of Chaucer Road, Acton. They were taken from "seams of white sandy clay 9 feet from the surface, beneath deposits of gravel and brick earth," and in this vicinity he obtained a tooth of the mammoth, *Elephas primigenius*.

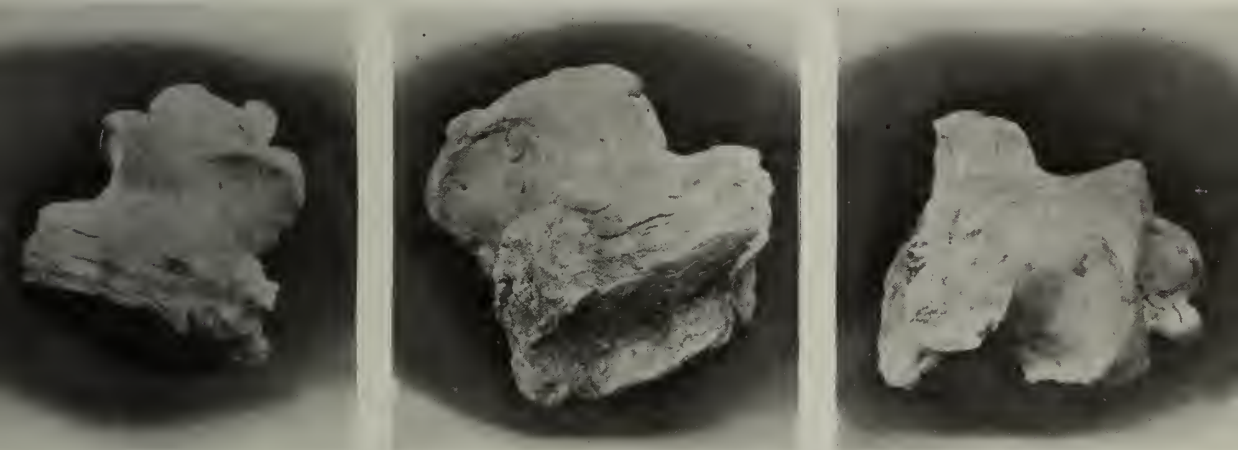
Mr. Joseph McCabe in his "Prehistoric Man" (Milner & Co.) says:—"Our present knowledge puts the dawn of civilisation, in the valley of the Nile and on the heights above the valley of Mesopotamia, at about 10,000 years ago. But man had then existed on this planet during a period which hardly any competent student would now estimate at less than 100,000 years. In that long night preceding the dawn of history were slowly shaped the ideas and institutions from which civilisation would eventually issue. So in regard to primitive man any estimate which falls short of 100,000 years since the beginning of the Palaeolithic period may be ignored, but it is difficult to go beyond this."

Mr. Boyd Dawkins, in his "Early Man in Britain," gives a diagram of an excavation in Myrtle Road which shows that at a depth of 8 feet 8 inches a bed of gravel was reached in which were found the implements of prehistoric man, and also the trunk of a tree—probably the Scotch fir! and further "in the 'mid-terrace gravel' at Brown's orchards, Acton Green, many fossil animals have been determined by Professor Busk, consisting of the small-nosed rhinoceros, horse hippopotamus, bison, Brown's fallow deer, reindeer, grizzly bear, and mammoth, on a layer of gravel resting on the London clay. No palaeolithic implements have been discovered in the gravels at this level; but they have been obtained out of the bed of the Thames at Battersea and Hammersmith, so that man is proved to have been dwelling in the neighbourhood of London while the gravels were being accumulated high above the Thames, as well as while they were being formed at and below its present level. It may, therefore, be inferred that he was a contemporary of these animals which frequented the valley of the Thames in the intermediate period."

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During this month November 1912, it has been announced in the press that one of the most important pre-historic finds of our time has been made in Sussex,—the skull of a palaeolithic man, said to be by far the earliest trace of mankind that has been found in England. It is supposed to date from the beginning of the Pleistocene period, and was found with the bones of one of the most ancient types of elephant, in a deep gravel pit which formed the beach of a very old river bed.

Our townsman, Mr. S. Walker, writing to the "Acton Gazette" in September, last year says:—"It would not be easy for any of us modern inhabitants of Acton to realise that those old Actonians could hunt the bison in Springfield Park, or meet a herd of mammoths coming up Church Road, or run away from a rhinoceros on his way to the river in Acton-lane! Yet this is fact and not fiction." He also refers to the discovery of a boulder stone now lying in Mr. Woollard's front garden in Churchfield-road: "Boulder stones were large and small masses of rock brought down during the Glacial period by the ice from the hills and mountains of the north, and dropped on the land when and where the ice happened to melt. As the ice sheet which covered northern Europe during the Glacial period did not reach farther south than the Thames, this particular block (and a smaller one now lost, as my informants tell me) was found when digging in the field to the north of Shakespeare-road and near the footbridge over the North London Railway. To ascertain what kind of rock this boulder is I took a specimen of it to different experts, both at Jermyn Street and at South Kensington, and elsewhere, and they all agreed that it was a granite of northern origin, but of what particular kind they



Skull of an Irish Elk, found by Mr. George S. Baker, 1912.

could not be certain. Only one authority ventures on a definite statement and I quote his letter:—"Geological Survey and Museum, Jermyn Street, S.W. Dear Sir, Mr. Barrow has had a slide prepared from the specimen of the Acton boulder which you sent him. The rock is a diorite, and is undoubtedly a travelled boulder, probably ice-borne. Neither Mr. Barrow nor I know any Scotch diorites like this one, and consequently we believe that it may be Scandinavian. Rocks have been brought from Norway into the Thames Valley by ice action, so there is nothing at all improbable in ascribing such an origin to the specimen in question, yours faithfully, JOHN S. FLETT."

An interesting find has been made during the present year by Mr. George S. Baker. This was of a skull of an Irish Elk, discovered at Mersea Island. A small piece of one of the antlers was found sticking out of the clay on shore after a storm. Starting to dig it out, Mr. Baker found the skull with a corresponding piece of the other antler. The pieces of antlers measured from about 1 ft. to 15 inches on each side of the skull, but were so friable that they came to pieces on his trying to



remove them. The part which remains is only the upper portion and back of the skull.

It shows that it has been water worn, and probably the face was broken before it was washed to the position where it was found. It was perfectly embedded in the clay and came clearly away. So far as is known this is the first specimen of Irish Elk found at Mersea Island, but some remains are said to have been found at Walton-on-Naze.

Mr. Charles Robinson, one of the large farmers of the South Downs in an interesting address recently reported in the "Sussex Times" gives a suggestive sketch of pre-historic times and the beginnings of stock keeping:—

"Probably the first step towards becoming stock farmers and possessors of domestic animals occurred in 'calling in the dog' (by obtaining young animals of wild species) to assist the savage man in taking his game, and to confirm this the bones of the dog were found along with very ancient skeletons of the human race. Then very possibly some young animals of the antelope or goat tribes were taken home alive—perhaps as playmates for the savage children—and grew up tame around the huts or caves in which the tribe dwelt, until some of them became mothers in their turn, and it struck some intelligent savage that if the kid (for very probably man's first cow was a goat) thrived so well on its mother's milk, the same milk might be good for the savage child. And so very gradually was evolved by experiment and selection the milking cow that represented to-day a foundation stone with the stock and dairy farmer. For many centuries probably stock farming represented herding, and depending entirely, summer and winter, on the natural grasses and wild growths of the unfenced country; and by keeping the young kid or calf in captivity at the settlement for the time being of the tribe, the rude herdsman obtained security for the return at night of the mother animal and took first toll of her milk when she came back from the wilderness. For ages the man who owned most cattle, sheep, and goats was the richest man of the community, and the man who had plenty of live stock could buy the most tribes, and his herdsman often became his bodyguard and fighting men, and were pretty sure to stick to him as long as they got plenty of meat. Little by little the process of enclosure of separate estates and farms came about, and, with the introduction (probably from the Continent) of artificial grasses and the cultivation of wheat, after the Roman occupation, when the population increased, brought them up to something near the type of stockfarming that prevailed to-day. The dairy industry appeared to have been much later in its development. Increasing population and improved means of transport soon made stock farming an important industry, and as their navy and shipping increased about the time of Queen Elizabeth the demand for salt beef and pork for the long voyages of the sailing ships must have given a great spurt to production, as all the meat required had to be grown in the homeland."

But now, may we turn from the dim and almost indistinguishable outlines on the far horizon of human life, to a comparatively near prospect of the early dawn of history in this part of Middlesex. It may be of interest to give a brief sketch of the inhabitants of our neighbourhood before the coming of the Romans. The following from the pen of Jean Bleau in 1662, which lies before the writer in old French, gives us a condensed account:—

"Those whom Cæsar calls *Trinobantes*, Ptolemeus and Tacitus *Trinoantes*, lived with the Cattieuchlains in these regions, which by a change of name are now called Middlesex and Essex. I cannot even guess from whence comes this ancient name, if it is not from the English term Tre-nant, which means towns in a valley.



For this region is almost entirely sunk in a valley near the Thames. In this I do not wish to flatter this, my own opinion. Nevertheless, those who inhabited Galloway in Scotland, all sunk in valleys, were in ancient times called in Britain *Noantes* and *Novantes*, and in the valley of the Rhine, called in French le Vault, a people called in former times *Nantuates* had their dwelling and their name; anyhow, this conjecture seems as probable as that of those who have ambitiously derived this name *Trinobantes* from Troy, as if it signified the *New Troye*. In the time of Cæsar it was one of the fortified cities of these regions (as this Cæsar calls "city" a people who possess the same right) and Imanuentes reigned there. He having been massacred by Cassivelauns (Cassibelin), his son Mandubrace escaped death by flight, went towards Cæsar in Gaul, and, relying upon his promise, went back with him to Britain, when our Trinobantes asked Cæsar by Ambassadors to protect Mandubrace against Cassibelin, and to give him the government of their city. Cæsar having granted their request they were the first of the Britons to yield to him. This Mandubrace, it may be remarked in passing, is always called Androgeus by Eutropius, Bede, and the moderns. I am not able to discover the origin of this diversity, unless it be that a man learned in the English history and language has told me that this name Andogeu was given him in consideration of his crimes and treason. For the signification of crime is seen manifestly therein, and in the book of the three traitors of England he is depicted as the most wicked, because he called the



Coins of Cunobelin.

first of the Romans to Britain, and betrayed his country. After Mandubrace, civil war having obliged the Romans to neglect Britain and leave her to live under her own kings and laws, it is certain that Cunobelin reigned in this country. We show certain of his coins. Admire his son, driven away by his father, took refuge, with some followers, with Cæsar Caligula, and placed himself in his hands; the which so greatly puffed up the heart of this young Emperor that he wrote magnificent letters to Rome, as if the whole of the Island had placed herself under his sceptre, and charged the bearer often only to give them to the Consuls in the temple of Mars, and when the Senate was all assembled. Cunobelin dead, Aulus Plautius attacked this region under the auspices of the Emperor Claudius, killed Togodumnus one of the sons of Cunobelin, conquered the other named Catagratius, over whom he also triumphed, as is recorded in the annals of the Capitol, with so much honour that on the way to the Capitol and when returning, Claudius was always at his side, as Tacitus reports; and, incontinent, having sent legions there, he very soon reduced it to the status of a Province. After that the Trinobantes laid down their arms and only took them up under the Empire of Nero, having conspired with the men of Suffolk to shake off the yoke of the Romans; but Suetonius Paulinus very soon extinguished this fire of sedition with the blood of the people of Britain. At last, the Roman Empire having come to an end in Britain, Vortigernius Britannicus gave this region with others as ransom to the







Saxons, who held him prisoner, as Ninnius writes, and many kings reigned there who only reigned by the favour of the kings of Kent and the Mercias. One of them named Sebert first embraced the faith of Christ in the year 803 and left the kingdom to the Western Saxons."

In the researches of Mr. Montagu Sharpe (published in his "Antiquities of Middlesex," "Roman Centuriation" and other works, to which the reader is referred), interesting accounts are given of the ancient ford across the Thames south-west of Acton, which was used prior to the building of London Bridge. This old pile-protected ford at Braganda (Brentford) appears fully established as the point where Julius Cæsar made his entry (B.C. 54) into the country of the Catuvellauni on his way to the capture of the stronghold of Cassivellaunus—probably Verulamium, now St. Alban's. The Catuvellauni had defeated the Trinovantes, and "held the command of the northern bank of the Thames up to Oxford, and the two great fords of Brentford and Wallingford."

They were at this time chief of the British Tribes, Mandubratius of the Trinovantes having been driven forth, and his people having made their submission to Cæsar. Mr. Montagu Sharpe says: "The acquisition by the Romans of the lands of the Catuvellauni which then included Essex, Herts, Middlesex and Bucks, dates from A.D. 43, when Claudius Cæsar with the army under his general Aulus Plautius forced the passage of the great ford over the lower Thames at Brentford, and marched to Camulodunum (Colchester) which he soon captured. Verulamium, a former British capital town, was subsequently taken, and about A.D. 58 was established as a municipium by Nero. It appears that Camulodunum was created a colony about this time, for Tacitus (A.D. 61—120) records that it had only 'recently been planted as a colony' when in A.D. 61 that city was put to the sword by the British under Boadicea, who also captured Verulamium and Londinium, the latter town being at that date not indeed 'signalled by the title of a colony, but very much frequented by an abundance of merchants and ships that enter its ports.' And again, 'After the Romans had shortened the old tribal trade route through the ford at Brentford by transferring it to London, the settlement there soon sprang into importance. Supplies of corn and cattle, etc., would be brought in, not only for the needs of the inhabitants, but also for shipment from the port, and the nearest district to furnish these supplies was the fertile stretch of land along the Thames valley in Middlesex, between the Brent and the Lea.'"

These celebrated old Romans, who were a great deal more than military road makers—though in this they excelled and stopped not at difficulties but took their ways straight as an arrow over the ridges of the land, making the ambushing of their forces more difficult by an enemy—were also the pioneers in a very real way in implanting national characteristics, in their establishment of trade, and in the administration of justice. Augustus Cæsar acquired in A.D. 19 the friendship of the British Princes, who, says Strabo: "brought the whole island into a state little short of intimate union with the Romans. They bear moderate taxes on the exports into and imports from Gaul, so that the island needs not a garrison."

The number and extent of the discoveries at Acton of pre-historic implements and remains, and the possibility that an awakened interest in this field of research may lead to many more specimens being found, will perhaps be sufficient reason for the space given to this section; although necessarily it is limited to a brief sketch touching a few features only of this great subject.



Historical.

III.

ACTON'S earliest days are wrapped in mystery. No trace of certain information concerning it prior to the beginning of the 13th century has come down to us.

It is safe, however, to conjecture that an eminence so near to London, which at that date had become the object of a deed of gift and the foundation of a chantry in St. Paul's, was in existence long before that time.

Previous to the Roman invasion we have seen that the whole of Middlesex, including Acton, formed part of the district inhabited by the Trinobantes, already referred to in the foregoing section. This people dwelling in the eastern valley of the Thames, on its northern side, may have derived their name from the situation of their country bordering this broad expanse of water, which was then much less confined and probably of much greater volume than at the present day. The maps already shown, which were published over 250 years ago, have an interest in this connection from the title reference to these Trinobantes.

The attention drawn by Mr. Montagu Sharpe and others to the Roman remains in Middlesex, and to Cæsar's passage of the Thames on his second invasion of Britain, B.C. 54, led to the commemoration by a memorial stone set up at Brentford Ferry in 1909. It seems extremely probable that our particular neighbourhood was traversed by the great Roman on his way to his headquarters in Essex. Referring to this memorial stone, the "Daily Telegraph" of 9 May, 1909, notes:—"The episodes selected are the passage of the Thames at the Ferry by Cæsar, the Synod of 780, the battle between Edmund Ironside and Canute in 1016, and the Battle of Brentford, in 1642, between the Roundheads and the Royalists. The granite for the monument formed the superstructure of the old bridge over the Brent."

During the Roman occupation Acton no doubt had its share with the other parts of England in the innumerable battles of the period.

Although there are no distinct traces of Roman occupation in Acton except the old Roman roads, it is not unlikely that the moated "Pryors Place Farm" may have been the site of a Roman encampment.

The name, however, which it has probably borne for well nigh a thousand years, is suggestive of other occupants. Acton, "oak town," from the Saxon *ac* oak, and *ton* a town or village, tells unmistakably of its Saxon inhabitants, and also indicates its physical features, forming part of a vast forest of oaks, perpetuated now by the familiar "Old Oak Lane," "Oakfields," and other similar ancient names yet existent in the town and neighbourhood.

In an interesting account of the ancient village of Acton kindly placed at my disposal by the Rev. Prebendary Harvey, our thoughts are taken still farther back:—

"The Briton, the original inhabitant of the country, had been driven westward by the fire and sword of the fierce Saxon invader, and had carried with him into Wales, Cumberland, and Cornwall, not only his Druid worship, but also Christianity received from Gaul, and certain traces of civilisation learnt from the Romans before they withdrew to protect their own hearths and homes against the ever increasing hordes of barbarians. But one great trace of Roman civilisation the Britons had not been able to carry with them and that was the splendid roads which the Romans had made. The fact that two of these famous Roman roads joined one another close by may have helped to bring inhabitants to Acton.

But what do we know of these inhabitants? They are Saxons who have come over from the country about the mouth of the Elbe, and since they like their new settlement they intend to remain. They are heathen worshippers of Thor and Woden (hence our Thursday and Wednesday)—a terrible and licentious people. Their worship they carry on chiefly in oak forests."

It is quite natural to suppose that it was these forests that attracted this rude



Landing of Julius Cæsar and Massacre of the Druids beneath an ancient oak, showing Megalithic Temple, from an old plate.

and uncivilised people. Here in the woody glades they set up their temple for worshipping their gods, and round it there grew a ring of wooden huts occupied for the most part by the priests and their attendants. Many were the persons who travelled hither from the great city of Londinium in order to offer sacrifices or attend the solemn feast, when pans of simmering horseflesh and twisted horns of ale were supplied in plenty. Thus Acton, the town of oaks, sprang up.

With the re-establishment of Christianity under King Ethelbert and Queen Bertha in 597, its adherents were now able to come forth from their hiding places, and carry the good tidings throughout the length and breadth of the land.

Rude churches were built in every direction, and sometimes the temples of Thor and Woden were devoted to the worship of the one living and true God. Perhaps it was so at Acton, and it is not improbable that the site repeatedly built upon afterwards for its place of worship was even then so dedicated.

All this doubtless received a severe check with the advent of the next invader. "Just as the Saxon had driven the Britons westward and had caused to the original inhabitants and owners of the land the greatest distress, so now the Saxon began to suffer at the hands of the Dane. Making at first rapid descents upon our eastern shores, and always rapidly retiring, laden with spoil, the Danes at length began to form settlements, gradually became masters of more and more of our country, till for a time they governed the whole. It is not unlikely that Acton now saw a partial restoration of heathen superstitions—certainly it was a time of great distress. But, after all, the success of the Danes was not without its value: for there can be no doubt that to the Danish element in our population may be attributed much of that brave hearted sea-daring which has distinguished Englishmen in every succeeding age, and which has enabled our country to stand unrivalled as mistress of the seas." Some of these fierce Danes it is said spent the whole of the winter of the year 879 encamped near Fulham Palace, and indeed it is possible that the moat which now surrounds the Palace was made by them for the purpose of laying up their ships for the winter. Norden (*Speculum Britanniae* 1593) says in his account of Fulham:—"The hoste of the pagan Danes in the time of K. Alphred did winter there in the yeere of Christ 879 the woodes and apt scytuation of the place for passage by water (no doubt) moved them thereunto."

Then comes a long silence, unbroken till the time of the Norman Conquest and the beginning of the feudal system in England. "No sooner, however, had Danish rule lasted long enough to imprint its character upon our population, than a new order of things arose. It is true Christianity was restored; but we can well imagine the inhabitants of Acton had no agreeable time of it, for from Acton Hill no doubt frowned down one of those Norman strongholds which now rose in every town and village, and awed the terrified inhabitants into abject submission.

The language of the invader was, of course, not understood; and if two neighbours had a cause to be tried in the Baron's Court they were condemned to hear the proceedings conducted in the language of the foreigners—very often sadly to their own hurt and prejudice." William the Norman, following the Continental plan, divided up his new country, and granted to the great Nobles or Barons who helped him to make his conquest extensive estates, which they held as fiefs on conditions of service. "The Barons again granted portions of their estates to those who served them, and these last of all made smaller grants still to the tillers of the soil. Thus the whole land was divided into fiefs or manors, and part of our parish of Acton, with the parish of Ealing, became a part of the Manor of Fulham, and



was granted to the Bishop of London." But it was not by any means the whole of Acton which was so granted. There were, in fact, in the parish several manors, and it is of one of these that we have the first clear record. Newcourt's 'Repertorium,' published in 1708, reads:—

"Peter, the Son of Alulf, gave to Eustace, Bishop of London, forty Acres of arable Land in Acton, in the Field call'd Pulla, he paying yearly, to the said Peter, one Pound of Cumin-seed, which, after the Death of the said Bishop, the Dean of S. Paul's, accustom'd to pay yearly, to the said Peter; but he afterwards, for the Health of his Soul, remitted and quit-claim'd to God, and the Church of S. Paul, and to William de Sanctae Mariae Ecclesia, the Dean of the same, and to his Successors, the said yearly rent of Cumin-seed, and such Homages and Reliefs as his Predecessors were us'd to pay him.

In the Reign of King Henry III Galfry de Lucy, Dean of S. Paul's, founded a Chantry in S. Paul's Cathedral Church, to which Church he gave his Mannor, House and Lands in this Parish of Acton, reserving 100 s per annum to be paid to a Priest, celebrating Divine Service at the said Chantry, for the Health of his Soul, together with the Soul of Eustace de Fauconbergh, some time Bishop of London, and his Successors; also for the Soul of Philip de Fauconbergh, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, and paying XXS a year on the Day of his, the said Geffery's Obit, and a Mark at the Obit of the said Philip de Fauconbergh. Witnesses to this Charter, were Roger, Bishop of London; William de Raleigh, Treasurer of the Church of Exon; Rog. de la Dun, Hen. de Buccomt, John the Son of Ralph de Belmeis, Hamond de Bedefont.

After the founding and endowing of the before-mention'd Chantry by the said Galfry de Lucy, there were three messuages in this Parish, and two Shillings yearly Rent, given by Gregory, the son of Walter, Rector of this Church, to the Dean and Chapter of S. Paul's, for the farther maintenance of a Chaplain to celebrate in the said Chantry, which, after the Death of the said Galfry, was by Peter, the son of Alulf, confirm'd to the said Dean and Chapter by his Deed, dated 6.1d May 28. Henry III. 1244.

In the first of King Edw. III. Adam de Herwinton Clerk in Consideration of a certain sum of Money paid, gave and granted to the Prior and Convent of S. Barthol. in West Smithfield, certain Lands and Tenements, which he held, in this Parish, of the Bishop of London, which Grant, Stephen Gravesend, Bishop of London, in the Month of March 1327 confirm'd to the said Prior and Convent and their Successors, doing all usual Services, and paying 2 s a year, and a Relief to the said Bishop and his Successors, according to the Accustom'd Knights-Fee, by which the Tenants have formerly held, upon every new Creation of a Prior." If the above first known Rector of Acton, Gregory Fitzwalter, "belonged to the great

family of that name (whose chief seat was at Dunmow in Essex and a member of which founded the world renowned custom known as the 'Dunmow Flitch') he must have been extensively connected with great families of the time.

"One of the early things we know for certain of Acton is that part of it was regarded by its Lord, the Bishop of London, as a feeding ground for his pigs, which no doubt used to thrive well on the acorns that fell from the oak trees. The little town kept up its old tradition as to pigs until quite recent



years, when the Public Health Acts at last drove them off." About the time the said bequests were made it has been stated the little village must have begun to be a place of considerable local interest, and that King Henry III., who reigned during the long and troublous period from 1216 to 1272, had a seat here to which he often retired from the noise and tumult of his turbulent nobles, led by the great and powerful baron, Simon de Montfort.

The writer has not been able to trace any early authority for this often repeated statement which in various forms has appeared in print. It has sometimes been given as a quotation from Norden (1593), and hence the confusion has probably arisen. An examination of the Mss. as well as the printed "*Speculum Britanniae*," the outcome of an order of Queen Elizabeth in council 1593 authorising John Norden to travel through England and Wales and make more perfect descriptions, charts and maps, it is clear that the allusion he makes to Henry III. is not in reference to Acton at all, but comes under the description of Fulham, and reads:—"The house of the bishop of London were bult fr his recreation and so to take the ayre he often resorteth. Heny ye 3 often lay at this place."

Says Mr. Walter Adam Brown:—"As a rule the history of a place begins with the erection of its place of worship, and there is every reason to believe that the present parish church stands on the site of the first church erected here, and that probably it took the form of a Norman castle, built to serve a two-fold purpose, first to awe the Saxons, and second to serve as a place of worship.



Old King Street, showing Church Wall on the left near the site of Sir Matthew Hale's house.

It was the practice of the early Normans to build their churches with fortifications, so that in case of necessity they could resist the assaults of a foe; the windows were small, narrow, and high up, and the walls and entrances were all designed for the purpose of repelling an attack. In after years as the necessity ceased, so these buildings ceased to be erected like castles and were built for worship only. The church of St. Mary's, Acton, is a rectory, and has always been in the gift of the Bishop of London.

Just inside the western door of the church is a painted tablet upon which is inscribed a list of the Rectors of Acton, beginning with Gregory Fitzwalter in 1244, and ending with the present Rector, George Spencer de Sausmarez, M.A., 1896. They are as follows:—

1244	Gregory Fitzwalter.	1576	John Kendall.
1290	John De Acton.	1627	Daniel Featley, D.D.
1320	Ralph De Acton.	1643	Philip Nye, M.A.
1336	Adam Pykeman.	1660	Bruno Ryves, D.D.
1361	Richard De Pertinhale.	1677	Anthony Saunders, D.D.
1365	William De Coleyne.	1719	William Hall.
1393	Richard Thurston.	1726	Edward Cobden, D.D.
1400	John Wyratt.	1764	George Berkeley, LL.D.
	John Wyghton.	1768	Philip Cocks.
1439	John Dalby.	1797	William Antrobus, B.D.
1443	John Berdevile.	1853	John Smith, B.D.
1452	John Isaac.	1859	Edward Parry, M.A.
1486	John Byrde.	1869	Charles Musgrave Harvey, M.A.
1542	Hugo Turnbull.	1896	George Spencer De Sausmarez, M.A.
1563	Ralph Cockerell.		



One of the earliest known views of St. Mary's Church, Acton.

John de Acton, so named probably from the place, was the second known Rector. He was evidently some relation to the Walter de Acton who sold the three acres of land to the Dean of St. Paul's about the year 1220.

John de Acton was followed by Ralph de Acton. This Ralph de Acton was born in Oxford, where he took the degree of Doctor of Divinity, and preached the Gospel in the dangerous times of Edward II., A.D. 1320."



From this time forward we have nothing to record for over 160 years, when we come down to the age of the first inscription, a brass in Acton Church, which informs us that

“ Here lyeth Henry Gosse and Alice his wyff 1485.”

“ The following year we find the Rector is the Rev. John Byrde, Priest and Parson of Acton, who has a memorial stone in the church dated 1542, and according to the inscription thereon ‘ the prayers of the faithful are desired for the repose of his soul.’ His ministry extended from 1486 to 1542, a period of fifty-six years.”

Although in the year 1534 King Henry VIII. had broken with Rome, and the Church of England was in the struggle of re-establishing her own independence, the above inscription indicates that as yet only a partial change had taken place even eight years after the final breach.

“ Two years later, *i.e.* in 1544, much of Acton changed its landlord. King Henry VIII. seized one of its manors (probably the manor belonging to Berrymead Priory), and gave it to Lord John Russell. It is not unlikely that this seizure consisted also of lands of another religious house which must have existed at Friar’s Place.

No doubt these houses, in fear of dissolution in 1537, had made over their lands to some lay persons, and so for a time had escaped the King. Seldom however could such things be done without discovery, and whenever they were discovered the king’s claim was immediately pressed and established. About this time, the beginning of the reign of Edward VI., there were at Acton, according to a document still extant, 158 ‘ howselyng folk,’ *i.e.*, church communicants.”

Lord John Russell sold the Berrymead Priory Manor to Herbert, Earl of Worcester. Subsequently it passed to the Marquis of Halifax, who died here in 1700, and then to the Duke of Kingston, who was frequently visited here by George II.

Mr. G. H. Monson, referring to an exchange of manors and parsonages quoted by Lysons made by the King with the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul’s by deed, dated the 20 April 1543-4, in which the “ Manor Landes and woodes in Acton ” are valued at five pounds thirteen and fourpence says:—“ If (as seems highly probable) the Manor House of the Dean and Chapters Manor at Acton occupied the site of the house known in later years as Acton Priory, or Berrymead Priory, it was included in this exchange. The King appears to



Lord John Russell.



have immediately granted the Dean and Chapters Lands at Acton, together with the forfeited Estates of the Priory of St. Bartholomew there, to his favourite John Lord Russell, Lord Privy Seal, subject to a fee farm rent of thirty-four shillings. It is from descendants of this John Russell that 'Bedford Park' derives its name, and it may be interesting to recall the history of this old Dorsetshire family which appears to have risen to prominence through a favourable introduction to Court. Sir Bernard Burke in his *Peerage* relates that towards the end of the reign of Henry VII. the Archduke Philip of Austria, only son of the Emperor Maximilian I. and husband of Joanna daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella King and Queen of Castile and Aragon having encountered a violent hurricane in his passage from Flanders to Spain was driven into Weymouth, where he landed and was hospitably received by Sir Thomas Trenchard, Knight, a gentleman of rank in the neighbourhood. Sir Thomas immediately apprised the court of the circumstance, and while waiting for instructions, invited his first cousin, Mr. John Russell, then recently returned from his travels, to attend upon the Prince. The Prince, fascinated by Mr. Russell's companionable qualities, desired that he should accompany him to Windsor, whither the King had invited him on a visit. On the journey the Archduke became still more pleased with his attendant's 'learned discourse and generous deportment,' and recommended him strongly to the King. Mr. Russell was in consequence taken immediately into Royal favour, and appointed one of the Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber. Becoming subsequently a favourite of Henry VIII. and a companion of that Monarch in his French Wars, Mr. Russell was appointed to several high and confidential offices. He was finally elevated to the Peerage, on 9 March 1538-9 as Baron Russell of Cheney in Bucks, and on the dissolution of the Monasteries in the following year obtained a grant of the site of the Abbey of Tavistock and the extensive possessions belonging to it. After the accession of Edward VI. Lord Russell had a grant of the Lands belonging formerly to the Abbey of Woburn in Bedfordshire, and was created Earl of Bedford on 19 January 1550. He died in 1555 and was succeeded by his son Francis, a nobleman of great eminence in the time of Elizabeth; Francis, 2nd Earl of Bedford, died in 1585 and his eldest son (Francis) having died during his father's lifetime, the Earldom passed to his grandson Edward. Sir William Russell, a brother of the 2nd Earl of Bedford, resided at Corney House, Chiswick, and was visited there by Queen Elizabeth in the year 1602. The manor and lands at Acton which had been granted by Henry VIII. to the 1st Earl appear to have been acquired by or to have descended to the 2nd son of the 2nd Earl, John Russell, whose daughter Anne married Henry Somerset 5th Earl and 1st Marquis of Worcester." Mr. Monson adds:—"It may be observed that the Somerset crest, a 'portcullis,' appears amongst the ornamentations at Acton Priory."

The next fifty years following Edward VI.'s reign was a period of much party excitement and persecution, and no doubt many a fugitive made his way hastily along the high road through the village of Acton in his escape from London to some secure retreat in the west.

It was now that Acton began to be a pleasant suburb, and became the place of residence of many families of the upper class. Viscount Conway, principal Secretary of State to James I. and Charles I. had a residence here. His widow, the Viscountess Conway, died at Acton and left to the parish a small charity, still

called by her name, in aid of the education of the poor. This charity is now used every year toward the funds for scholarships for our local schools.

It was about this time, in the year 1612, that one Thorney constructed a conduit in the Uxbridge Road for the benefit of the numerous passers by. It is referred to in James Thorne's "Environs of London" as a "convenient conduit at the entrance to Acton on the London side made and endowed for the public benefit by Thomas Thorney in 1612, and recovered to the public use at a heavy cost by means of a chancery suit instituted by Samuel Wegg in 1755." It is marked by a pump erected by the Rev. W. Antrobus in 1819.

The Rev. Prebendary Harvey's account of it says:—"The conduit gradually fell out of repair till at length Mr. Wegg, a comparatively recent inhabitant and benefactor redeemed it from uselessness by causing a pump to be erected where man and beast might slake their thirst. The water however is now said to be polluted, perhaps owing to the immediate neighbourhood of the new churchyard, and it has been closed."

A fuller reference to the second pump provided by the Rev. W. Antrobus is given in the Charity Commissioners' report published in 1825.

The old disused pump still stands in a recess of the wall nearly opposite the Public Free Library in High Street, but it is hidden by a barricade of boarding.

In the year 1640, two years before the breaking out of the Civil war between King Charles I. and his Parliament, an event occurred at Acton of which there is a curious and exact record. Many may have noticed the massiveness of some of the Communion Plate which is used at the Parish Church. At the same time the form and the ornament of the flagon indicate that it was probably not made in the first instance for its present purpose. This all agrees with what is known of the origin of the plate, for it was presented to the church in 1640 by the Lady Dudley, and the following are some extracts from the Churchwardens' accounts of the time bearing upon the point:—

"Item.—Paid for a pottle of Canary wine for the ringers when the Lady Dudley brought the plate which she gave to the church	2	0
Item.—Laid out when we went to give the Lady Dudley thanks for the plate, for our dinner and other expenses for five persons and their horses	9	0
Item.—Paid to David King for two journies to carry the plate to be consecrated, and afterwards to bring it home, for his own expense and his horses	5	0
Item.—Given to Lady Dudley's men when they brought the carpet which she gave to the church	7	6

The carpet has disappeared but the plate remains, and it forms a very real link with a distant past, when it is remembered that these old vessels were once handled and set apart or consecrated to their long service in this church by Bishop, afterwards Archbishop, Juxon, when Laud was Primate who was afterwards imprisoned and at length executed by order of the Long Parliament. Lysons says:—"It does not appear whether Lady Dudley resided at Acton, or what connection she had with the parish. She was the wife of the celebrated Robert Dudley, made Duke of Northumberland by the Emperor."

N.B.—There is a return in the Record Office, dated 1552, made by Humphrey Dynsert and Philip Campayn, Churchwardens, of goods, plate, ornaments, jewels, and bells appertaining to the church at Acton.

"Not every incident, however," says the Rev. Prebendary Harvey, "was as pleasant as the giving and receiving of church plate. Earnest were the strifes of words which at times in the reign of King Charles I. might be heard in the little main street of our ancient village. And at length in 1642, when both parties made a sudden and eager appeal to arms, cavaliers with long flowing curls, huge ruffles, and richly embroidered doublets and trappings, might be seen galloping down towards Brentford, while the cropped heads, high crowned hats and broad collars of the Parliament men, under the Earls of Essex and Warwick, poured into Acton, which was to be for a few days their headquarters and basis of action. We can imagine the general excitement when, on the day after their arrival, the word was given to march to Brentford against the King's forces under Prince Rupert, the most dashing General of the age. Fiercely did the followers of Essex and Warwick maintain and renew the attack, and they were gradually gaining an advantage, when suddenly they found they had spent all their ammunition. They were consequently about to be worsted 'when it pleased God,' says the old chronicle, 'that Colonels Hampden and Holles came up to our aid, and then we gained our battle with little loss on our part.'" After this victory the Parliamentarians retired to Acton. Almost every house in our little village was now filled with soldiers. The Parliamentarians literally quartered themselves upon the inhabitants, and even the Rector was turned out of house and home to make room for Colonel Urry, who had command of the forces stationed in the village."

The battle at Acton or at Turnham Green in November 1642, was described at the time in a pamphlet entitled "An exact and true relation of the battell fought on Saturday last at Acton, between the King's Army and the Earl of Essex his forces," but it is certain that the site of the battle was Acton Green or Acton Back



Interior of the old St. Mary's Church, Acton, showing the ancient high backed pews and galleries.



adjoining Turnham Green. Charles had taken and sacked Brentford, and hoped to surprise London, but the City train bands and other troops stood their ground well, Charles drawing off baffled. Essex sent Hampden to Acton to attack Charles in the rear, but was persuaded into recalling him.

Evelyn's Diary, 1642 reads:—"12th Nov<sup>r</sup> was the Battle of Braine-ford surprisingly fought and to the greate consternation of the citty had his Majesty (as t'was believed he would) pursu'd his advantage. I came in w<sup>th</sup> my horse and armes just at the retreate, but was not permitted to stay longer than the 15th by reason of the Army's marching to Glocester, which would have left both me and my brothers expos'd to ruine, without any advantage to his Majestie." At this period, says Mr. Walter Adam Brown, "the Rector was Dr. Daniel Featley, who had a very stirring and interesting life. His real name was Fairclough. He was born at Charlton in Oxfordshire, educated at the University and was a man of great learning and eloquence, with great gifts in controversy. Having worsted his rivals in England he went over to France, but for the present reference it is needless to follow his successes there. After his return from France he was made Rector of Northill in Cornwall, Archbishop's Chaplain, Rector of Lambeth, a Brother of the Savoy Hospital and a Member of All Hallows, Bread Street. He exchanged this for the Rectory of Acton in 1627, and was then appointed third Master of Chelsea College. In this preferment he did good work and was loved by all who knew him, until the fatal year of 1642, when the Puritans, fresh from the battle of Brentford, took up their quarters at Acton. The soldiers not only took possession of the Rectory but drank up all the Rector's wine and ate up his provisions; they burnt his barn full of corn and his stables."\* The Parish Church was entered by force, the font was thrown down and defaced, the windows were smashed, and the chancel rails, forming in all probability the rood screen which used to stand in all churches at the entrance to the chancel, were torn down, carried into the High Street, and burnt. The Rev. Prebendary Harvey adds:—

"A few days later some of these soldiers followed the Rector to Lambeth, his other parish, to which he had hastily retired on his ejection from the Rectory here. When they arrived he was celebrating Divine Service. They therefore waylaid him, declaring that they would chop him up because he permitted "pottage" in his church. "Pottage" was the nickname for that glorious inheritance of ours the Book of Common Prayer. The Rector, it appears, discovered their intentions and managed at the end of the service to make his escape."

Although in these fierce times many were thus ready to persecute Dr. Featley to the death, on account of his inclinations and principles, yet we read that he lived down his unpopularity, enjoyed both his livings and again became of great reputation. For a short time, too, he became a member of the "Assembly of Divines," which regulated religious matters under the Commonwealth.

A little later he refused to sign the Covenant, a document which was the great bond of union of the Parliamentarians, because in it it was declared to be lawful to take up arms against the king. He stated the reasons for his disagreement in a letter to Dr. Usher (who was then at Oxford with the King) and desired his opinion. This letter was intercepted and carried to the House of Commons, which voted the Doctor a spy—a betrayer of the Parliament cause—sequestered his livings, and imprisoned him in Lord Peter's house in Aldersgate Street on the 30th September 1642. There he stayed until March 1644, when, his health having given way, the poor man entreated to be removed to some place where the *regime* would be milder. His request was granted, and he was removed to Chelsea: but it was too late, for

\* Whether willingly or by carelessness being in drink is not notified, says Rev. Bruno Ryves.

he had only been removed a few days when the end came. He died on the 16th of April 1645, and was buried in the chancel of Lambeth Church, where his tombstone can still be seen.



Rev. Daniel Featley, D.D.  
From engraving by W. Marshall, 1645.

In the "Repertorium" of Richard Newcourt, notary public and proctor general of the court of arches (whose father, of the same name, had produced the most valuable



delineation and map of London before its destruction by the great fire of 1666) gives the following account of Dr. Daniel Featley:—"In 1625 he left Canterbury's Service, and being marry'd retir'd to Kennington near Lambeth. In 1642, after Brentford Fight, some of the Rebels took up their quarters at Acton, who after they had missed this our Dr. Featley, drank and ate up his Provision, burnt down a Barn full of Corn, and two Stables, the loss amounting to 211£, and at the same time, did profane the Church, by their beastly actions, burnt the rails, pull'd down the Front, broke the Windows, and I know not what. In February following, the Rebels sought after him in Lambeth Church on the Lord's Day, to murder him, but he having timely Notice of their coming withdrew and sav'd himself. [It is said 'two parishioners were wounded and slain.'] In 1643, he was appointed one of the

Members of the Assembly of Divines, but there he refus'd to take the Covenant, and became a great Stickler against it, and in a Letter to Archbishop Usher, then at Oxford, shewed him his Reasons, why he excepted against it, a copy of which, or else another which he wrote about the same time, being treacherously got from him, was carried to the House of Commons, whereupon, being Judg'd to be a spy, and a Betrayer of the Parliament's cause, was on Sept. 30, seiz'd upon, and committed Prisoner to Peter-House in Aldersgate Street, and his Rectories taken away; this of Acton being given to Phil. Nye, and that of Lambeth to John White of Dorchester. He continu'd Prisoner in Peter-House, till the beginning of March 1644, but being drawn very weak and low, by the Dropsie, was by much Supplication to the Parliament remov'd for his Health-Sake to Chelsey-College, where he died April 17, 1645 and was according to his Will buried in the Chancel of Lambeth Church."



Frontispiece to Dr. William Leo's Funeral Sermon  
on the death of Rev. Daniel Featley, D.D.,  
with Epitaph.

the present Rector of Acton, Rev. G. S. De Sausmarez, M.A., was a notable disputant, even King James I. having graciously engaged with him in a "Scholastic Duel" on one occasion.

Another glimpse of Dr. Featley is given in 'Mercurius Rusticus' by Rev. Bruno Ryves, who afterwards became Rector of Acton. In describing the billeting of soldiers at Acton before Colonel Urry took up his quarters at the Parsonage House and respecting their questioning of their hosts in regard to Dr. Featley and his opinions and what Divine Service they had, he says:—"They answered according to the truth that he was a man who precisely observed the Canons of the Church and swerved not a tittle of the Rubrick of the Common Prayer, wearing the surplice, and using all rites and ceremonies of the Church established by law. Some of the

Dr. Featley, who was of Corpus Christi, Oxford, the College of



Redcoats replied 'Doth he so? We will teach him another lesson,' and then they proceeded to the Parish Church as already described.

"But to return to Acton: the day after the Rector fled to Lambeth the Royalist forces were reported to be marching towards Acton Hill. At once the Parliamentarians in the village were called to arms; and they gave, we are told, to the advancing Royalists so warm a reception that these beat a hasty retreat, closely pursued by the little army of Acton over Bollo Bridge the greater part of the way to Brentford.

In the Acton parish register there are to be seen several entries caused by the events of these stirring days. We read for instance: "Poor soldier buried," 'Poor trooper buried,' etc.

How long the Roundheads held Acton and how long their commander was quartered in the Rectory we do not know, but we do know the next Rector, Dr. Featley's successor, Philip Nye (1643), was a man much more to their liking. For a time he was attached to the more moderate and constitutional party among the Parliamentarians, whose only object it was to lead King Charles to share the Government fairly with the two great estates of the realm. But as time went on the new Rector joined the Independents who desired to maintain complete supremacy of Parliament, but amongst whom the more extreme section were bent upon the destruction of the Monarchy and the setting up of a Republic—a scheme which, with the army on their side, they presently carried out.

So prominent a man was Philip Nye that he was actually one of the commissioners chosen to go and propose conditions to the King when he was a prisoner at Carisbrooke Castle, in the Isle of Wight, and for this service he is recorded to have received £500.

The appearance of this Acton Rector seems to have been very striking. He wore a long curious beard of which he was very proud. This accounts for the keen satire of the following two well known lines of Butler's "*Hudibras*," when the poet writes:—

' With greater art and cunning reared  
Than Philip Nye's thanksgiving beard.'

Philip Nye certainly gave himself airs and had no mean opinion of himself. He did not vouchsafe to live among his people, but had a house in London, and



The old "Tuck Shop" and Mrs. Seymour's Dames School, formerly in the High Street, Acton Village.

every Sunday he used to drive down to Acton in a coach and four and preach long sermons to his admiring Puritan flock."

And now it was the opening of the year 1649, and the King, Charles I. was before President Bradshawe and his council of ten, called judges. The result is too well known to need repetition. The execution of the King took place on the 30th January in the same year. Three years later the little village of Acton itself witnessed a strange and wonderful scene.

Oliver Cromwell had on September 3rd 1652 won what he called "his crowning mercy" at Worcester, *i.e.*, he had utterly routed Charles II. who had fled beyond the sea. Cromwell was now marching with great pomp on his road towards London; and, lo! to Acton there came out to meet his Highness, in 300 coaches, a vast procession, consisting of the Lord President Bradshawe and his



*your Excellency's most  
humble servant*  
*O Cromwell*

Early portrait and fac-simile of writing of the great Protector, a number of whose friends came to reside in Acton where he occasionally visited.

council, the House of Commons, a few of the nobility, not to mention the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council of the City of London, the Train Bands, and the crowd following upon such a procession. The reading by the Recorder of London of his address of welcome to the great general as the troops halted at the foot of the hill, the longer address of the Rector the Rev. Philip Nye, the bearing of Cromwell as he reined in his charger, and listened to these addresses, his reply expressing thoughts and experiences but very imperfectly understood even by his friends, and his bow of dismissal to the great concourse can be better imagined than described. The solemn meeting at Acton brought to a close, at the head of his Troopers Cromwell swiftly rode down the Brentford now Gunnersbury Lane, on his way to Hampton Court where the victorious troops next took up their quarters.

In the ensuing year 1653, the Rev. Philip Nye appeared before the world in a new character, for he became a prominent member of the "Committee of Triers" whose duty it was to try or test men before they were allowed to preach or hold any parochial charge.

He however outlived his glory: for when Oliver Cromwell, mystic and mighty warrior, revealer of both the strength and the weakness of England, died in 1658, two years of unrest ensued, and then came the restoration of King Charles II. in 1660. Philip Nye was at once ejected from his living of Acton and all his other offices, and was very near being excepted from the general pardon granted by the restored monarch. As it was, he spent the rest of his days in obscurity. Of his son Lysons says:—"In 1650 John Nye was an assistant at this Church and received half the profits of the living, which was then valued at 200*£* per annum."

What twentieth century student of history or what unprejudiced reader of the stirring events of the seventeenth century or of our own can doubt that to the unconquerable spirit of devotion and the strength of heroic purpose which dwelt in Cromwell, all England, and indeed the world, yet owes a debt never fully discharged. We may not justify all his acts, nor lay upon him all that he has been made to bear, nor blind our eyes to the fact that excesses quickly brought re-action or even retribution; yet when all has been said there remains a mighty influence and a force most manifestly exemplified in himself which the nation never again wholly lost.

Cromwell's Mother traced her descent from Robert Bruce, and it is said that she and King Charles were eighth cousins. She was married to Robert Cromwell, second son of Sir Henry Cromwell, styled for his popular qualities the "Golden Knight," and descended from the sister of Thomas Cromwell, Minister and Vicar-General of Henry the Eighth. Robert Cromwell represented the borough of Huntingdon in the Parliament of 1593. They had a family of ten children and Oliver, the fifth child and second son, was the only boy who grew to manhood. Tradition preserves various stories of his childhood. One of these relates to a visit paid by his parents to their father, Sir Henry Cromwell. It is as follows:—

"When young Oliver was an infant in arms, it is related, having been one day taken to see his grandfather, a monkey somehow or other got hold of him, and ran off with him to the leads on the top of the house; whence, however, after running about with him for some time, the sagacious animal, as if knowing that it had the fortune of England in its keeping, brought down the child in safety, to the great relief of all the affrighted inmates, who had been crowding around with feather beds and other appliances to break his expected fall."

Another, not vouched for, and given "only as the report of the place" by one of Cromwell's biographers, the Rev. Mark Noble, says:—

"They have a tradition at Huntingdon that when King Charles I., then Duke of York, in his journey from Scotland to London, in 1604, called in his way at Hinchinbrook, the seat of Sir Oliver Cromwell, that knight, to divert the young prince, sent for his nephew Oliver, that he, with his own son, might play with his Royal Highness; but they had not been long together before Charles and Oliver disagreed; and, as the former was then as weakly as the latter was strong, it was no wonder that the Royal visitor was worsted; and Oliver, even at this age, so little regarded dignity, that he made the royal blood flow in copious streams from the Prince's nose."

"This," adds Noble, "was looked upon as a bad presage for that King when the civil wars commenced."



In his seventeenth year Cromwell entered Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, where it is said the entry of his name in the old parchment volume had put under it a century and a half later a latin to this effect :—

“This was that grand Impostor, that most execrable villain, etc.”

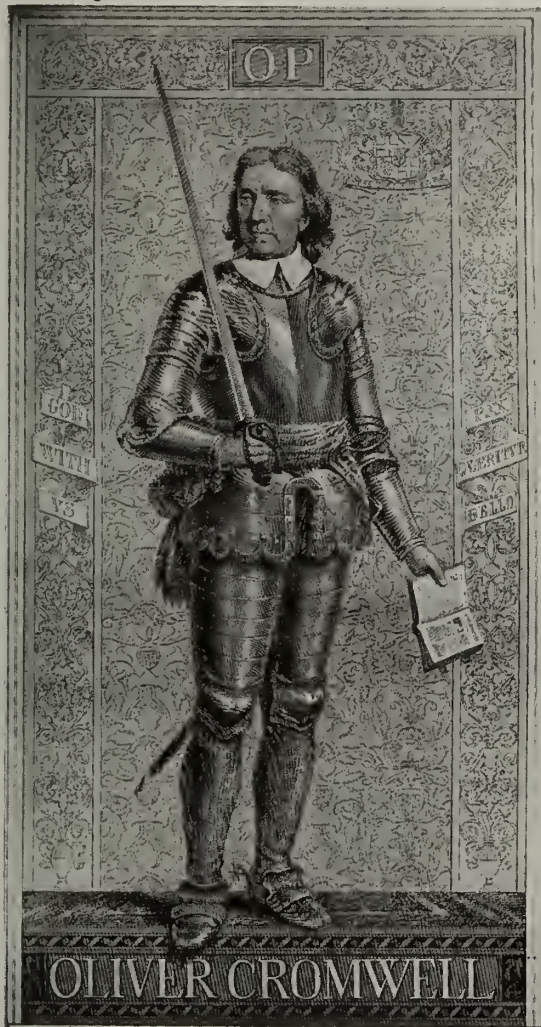
The death of Cromwell's father in 1617 prevented his continuing at the University, and it is supposed that shortly afterwards he came to London and studied law, probably in some attorney's office.

“On the 22nd of August 1620,” says Lord Brougham, “he was married in St. Giles Church, Cripplegate, to Elizabeth Bouchier, daughter of Sir James Bouchier, Knight, an eminent merchant of the City, and also the owner of an estate in land, where he usually resided, at Felstead, in Essex. It is said that this marriage was brought about through his relations the Barringtons and Hampdens. One of Cromwell's father's sisters, Joan, had married Sir Francis Barrington, Bart.; another, Elizabeth, was the wife of William Hampden, of Great Hampden, in Bucks, and the mother of the famous patriot, who was therefore first cousin to Cromwell, as he also was to Waller the poet, who was the son of his father's sister. As both the Hampdens and the Barringtons were families of popular politics, it is probable that the Bouchiers, about whom little is known, were of the same side. It is admitted on all hands that now at least Cromwell fixed himself at Huntingdon.” He had five sons and four daughters. His eldest son was born in October, 1621, and his youngest daughter and child in December, 1638.

It is not the writer's purpose in this brief sketch to follow the stirring incidents of Cromwell's eventful life; but a few references may help to a realisation of his character. Something of this is shown by a letter of his dated from St. Ives the 11th January, 1635 (or 1636 as now reckoned) which is quoted by Harris from the original in the British Museum, although such original is no longer to be found there. It is addressed :—

“‘To my very loving friend Mr. Storie, at the Sign of the Dog, in the Royal Exchange, London,’ and abundantly demonstrates the strong hold that religion or puritanism had by this time taken of him, and that his whole heart was in the work. Yet it equally expresses the practical turn and faculty of the man; it is an earnest application to Storie not to allow a lectureship, which he had been instrumental with other subscribers, in establishing in the county of Huntingdon, to go down for want of funds to pay the lecturer; and even Noble himself, a well-endowed clergyman, ought to have seen something more than ‘a convincing proof how far Oliver was at that time gone in religious enthusiasm,’ in the concluding sentences: ‘You know, Mr. Storie, to withdraw the pay is to let fall the lecture; for who goeth to warfare at his own cost? I beseech you, therefore, in the bowels of Christ, put it forward, and let the good man have his pay.’ Such indeed are all Cromwell's letters that have come down to us, without, we believe, a single exception. That the work of this world is to be done energetically, but in the spirit of a higher world—that is not so much the principle which he appears to have constantly kept in view as it is the man himself, the expression of his whole soul and being. If he was a religious enthusiast, he was certainly no mere dreaming visionary. The most unenthusiastic or irreligious person never showed more of sublunary sagacity, alacrity and strenuousness than he did in whatever he undertook. If his heart was elsewhere, his hand was not the less here. But in truth, his heart, too, was not the less among the things of earth for being also among those of heaven; for in his view heaven and earth were one—the earth was, in a sense, only a preliminary or lower heaven.”

About this date on the death of his uncle Sir Thomas Steward he removed to Ely, and shortly afterwards through his public-spirited action, taking the lead in preserving to the rightful owners neighbouring fen lands, the possession of which was threatened, he was from popular gratitude given the title "Lord of the Fens." This incident attracted the special notice of his friend and kinsman Hampden,



(After Cooper, by permission of Messrs. Blackie and Son).

who now spoke of his cousin as "an active person, and one that would sit well at the mark."

Cromwell was chosen one of the members for the town of Cambridge in what is known as the Short Parliament, which met on the 13th April 1640, and was dismissed on the 5th of May. He was returned again for the same place to the Long Parliament, which met on the 3rd of November.

Sir Phillip Warwick, in his memoirs, gives an interesting word picture of his first notice of Cromwell, when, in the beginning of this parliament, he writes "I vainly thought myself a worthy young gentleman, (for we courtiers valued ourselves much upon our good clothes). I came one morning into the house well clad, and perceived a gentleman speaking, whom I knew not, very ordinarily appparelled; for it was a plain cloth suit, which seemed to have been made by an ill country tailor, etc." Cromwell was speaking "in behalf of a servant of Mr. Prynne's" and the young courtier's impression was anything but a favourable one. He adds, "and yet I lived to see this very gentleman, whom out of no ill will to him I thus describe, by multiplied good successes, and by real but usurped power, having had a better tailor and more converse among good company in my own eye when for six weeks together I was a prisoner in his sergeant's hands, and daily waited at Whitehall, appear of a great and majestic deportment and comely presence."

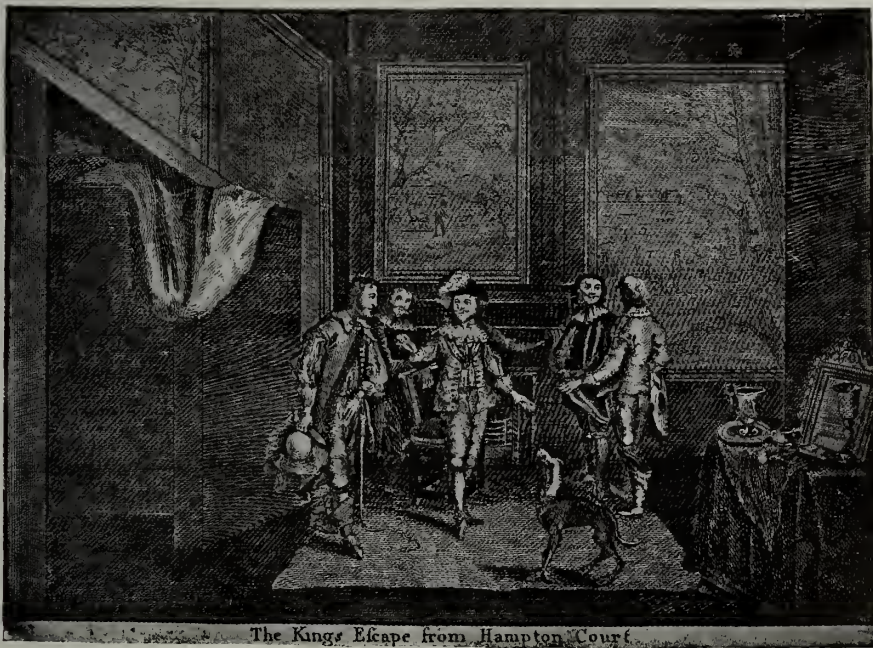
"He not only spoke," says Lord Brougham, "but was attentively listened to. The rude fervour and passion of his eloquence found an echo in the strong convictions and excited temper of his audience, and of the time, that made his earnestness a power, a spell. He gave expression and embodiment to the dominant national sentiment; not indeed in musical tones or well-turned periods, but with a voice and manner, with a force of action and kindling of eye, that spoke from the heart to the heart, and evinced both what an intensity of belief was in the man and with what fearlessness, if need were, he would act as well as speak. The reputation, too, of the courage and resources he had already shown as a champion of the public rights had, as we have seen, gone before him to this wider and higher field; and no doubt, however wild or extravagant his notions might be thought by some, many a suggestion or remark that dropped from him would confirm, with the great majority of his hearers, the favourable impression of his insight and faculty. At all events, that insight and faculty existed, and, whether recognised or not for the present, would be sure, in such a state of things as was now coming on, to make themselves be felt in due time. He was soon, however, to make himself sufficiently well known on another scene, and by something more than speaking. On the 15th of July D'Ewes records that 'Mr. Cromwell moved that we might make an order to allow the townsmen of Cambridge to raise two companies of Volunteers, and to appoint captains over them'; and on the same day the Journals testify that there was ordered to be repaid to him the sum of one hundred pounds, which he had expended in sending down arms into Cambridgeshire, for the defence of that county. Soon after this he appears to have gone down to his county, and to have taken the direction of affairs there into his own hands. On the 15th of August it is reported, from the Commission for the defence of the kingdom, that 'Mr. Cromwell, in Cambridgeshire, has seized the magazine in the castle at Cambridge, and hath hindered the carrying off the plate from that University, which, as some report, was to the value of twenty thousand pounds, or thereabouts'; and it is ordered that he have indemnity for having so acted. Finally, when the Parliamentary army was raised, and put under the command of the Earl of Essex, in September, Cromwell was made captain of one of the troops of horse (troop sixty-seven); and his eldest son Oliver, now a young man of twenty, cornet in another (troop eight)."

Long afterwards, in a speech to a Committee of Parliament which waited upon him at Whitehall, on the 13th of April, 1657, he made the following interesting references to the early part of his public career:—

"I was a person who, from my first employment, was suddenly preferred and lifted up from lesser trusts to greater, from my first being a captain of a troop of



horse ; and did labour as well as I could to discharge my trust ; and God blessed me as it pleased Him. And I did truly and plainly—and in a way of foolish simplicity, as it was judged by very great and wise men, and good men, too—desire to make my instruments help me in that work. And I will deal plainly with you. I had a very worthy friend then, and he was a very noble person, and I know his memory is very grateful to all—Mr. John Hampden. At my first going out into this engagement I saw our men were beaten at every hand. I did, indeed ; and desired him that he would make some additions to my Lord Essex's army of some new regiments ; and I told him I would be serviceable to him in bringing such men in as I thought had a spirit that would do something in the work. This is very true that I tell you ; God knows I lie not. 'Your troops,' said I, 'are most of them old decayed serving-men and tapsters, and such kind of fellows ; and,' said I,



The Kings Escape from Hampton Court

'their troops are gentlemen's sons, younger sons, and persons of quality ; do you think that the spirits of such base and mean fellows will ever be able to encounter gentlemen, that have honour and courage and resolution in them ?' Truly I did represent to him in this manner conscientiously ; and truly I did tell him—'you must get men of a spirit ; and take it not ill what I say—I know you will not—of a spirit that is likely to go on as far as gentlemen will go ; or else you will be beaten still' : I told him so ; I did truly.

He was a wise and worthy person, and he did think that I talked a good notion, but an impracticable one. Truly I told him I could do something in it. I did so ; and truly I must needs say this to you—impute it to what you please—I raised such men as had the fear of God before them ; as made some conscience of what they did ; and from that day forward I must say to you they were never beaten ; and wherever they were engaged against the enemy they beat continually."

These were they who came to be popularly known as Cromwell's Ironsides—the Invincible Ironsides, against whom shock of every battle broke itself as upon a rock of adamant.

The nine eventful years from 'Edgehill' to what Milton calls 'Worcester's laureate wreath,' need not be entered into; the latter being the last battle that Cromwell won actually with sword in hand.



King Charles I., Archbishop Laud, the first Earl of Kingston, and others, from an old plate published about 1665.



"An absolute ruler," to quote again from Lord Brougham, "less inclined to blood or cruelty than was Oliver Cromwell never existed; even Clarendon, who hated both the cause and the man, acknowledges that he was always opposed to sanguinary courses. Resolute soldier as he was, and capable as he showed himself to be of using the sword with unsparing severity when such was deemed necessary or expedient, he was unquestionably a kind-hearted man, and with all the strictness of his religious creed and practice, full of all gentle affections.

England, too, never stood in higher estimation with foreign powers and nations than it did while under the sway of Cromwell; the honour, dignity and greatness of the country had never been better maintained by any preceding ruler. The Dutch were compelled to sue for peace; advantageous treaties, first of peace, afterwards of alliance, were made with France, one of the results being the acquisition of Dunkirk; Spain was also humbled, and Jamaica wrested from her. No words can be stronger than those of Clarendon upon this part of the Protector's character and conduct:—"His greatness at home was but a shadow of the glory he had abroad. It was hard to discover which feared him most, France, Spain, or the Low Countries, where his friendship was current at the value he put upon it. As they did all sacrifice their honour and interest to his pleasure, so there is nothing he could have demanded that either of them would have denied him."

In a recent sketch of Cromwell the Rev. R. F. Horton, D.D. gives a sympathetic picture of the close of his great career:—

"The most human of men, tender, passionate in his tenderness, who would have preferred to live 'under his own woodside,' cherishing wife and children, loved by rustic neighbours, but driven to 'tread the paths of glory, and to sound the depths and shoals of honour' by no choice of ambition but by the stern voice of God. A great ruler of men, but greater as a father, a citizen, a Christian, than as a ruler. A man who lifted the star of England from the murky shadows of tyranny and national degradation, in which it had set, to the zenith; a man whose heart would break over the loss of a daughter whom he loved. On February 16th, 1658, Mr. Rich, the young husband of Frances, died. Oliver wrote to his grandfather, the Earl of Warwick, letters so 'seasonable and sympathising,' says the recipient, 'which, besides the value they derive from so worthy a hand, express such faithful affections, and administer such Christian advices as renders them beyond measure dear to me,'—that he could not sufficiently confess, much less discharge, his obligation. But in July the Protector was called to face a sorrow which no human words could comfort. His beloved daughter, Elizabeth Claypole, lay ill at Hampton Court with a painful, depressing, and incurable disease. All public business was laid aside. The governor of a great country became merely an anxious, prayerful father. For a fortnight he watched her unceasingly. He loved her, every one loved her, but he loved her beyond his life. He himself sickened in the strain of his terrible anxiety. Harvey, watching him day by day, saw his strength decline, 'a most indulgent and tender father,' who shone in that and all other personal relations, 'a most rare and singular example,' and indeed he wondered how the burdened mind and body had sustained the stress of life so long 'except that he was borne up by a supernatural power.' On Friday, August 6th, Elizabeth died, and with her the heart of her father died. A few days after, confined to his room, he asked for his Bible and read the passage, 'I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. . . . I can do all things' through Christ which strengtheneth me.' Turning to Harvey he said, 'This



Scripture did once save my life, when my eldest son (Robert) died, which went as a dagger to my heart, indeed it did.' Paul had learned that lesson, and as he revolved the words his faith rose triumphant. 'He that was Paul's Christ is my Christ too.' During these days of August George Fox came to Hampton Court to plead for the Friends, and in his strange inspired way 'saw and felt a waft of death go forth against him.' The illness, a 'bastard tertian,' grew upon him, and he was ordered to return to Whitehall, in the hope that the air would be better in London than on the river. It was now generally known throughout the country that his life was in danger, and 'prayers abundantly and incessantly poured out on his behalf, both publicly and privately, as was observed, in a more than ordinary way.' This praying people even cherished hopes that he would be restored, and for a time he himself inclined to the same thought, but 'we could not be more desirous he should abide,' says Harvey, 'than he was content and willing to be gone.' As he lay dying his mind was absorbed in the Covenant, that gracious guarantee of salvation which God has made with man, and sealed in Christ.

On Monday, August 30th, raged that tempest which seemed to every observer the fitting dirge of the earth over the passing of a noble soul; and in the height of the storm he murmured a prayer which was fortunately taken down by Harvey. 'Lord, though I am a miserable and wretched creature, I am in a covenant with Thee through grace. And I may, I will, come to Thee for Thy people. Thou hast made me, though very unworthy, a mean instrument to do them some good and Thee service; and many of them have set too high a value upon me, though others wish and would be glad of my death; Lord, however Thou may dispose of me, continue and go on to do good for them. Give them consistency of judgment, one heart, and mutual love; and go on to deliver them and with the work of reformation, and make the name of Christ glorious in the world. Teach those who look too much on Thy instruments to depend more on Thyself. Pardon such as desire to trample upon the dust of a poor worm, for they are Thy people too. And pardon the folly of this short prayer, even for Jesus Christ's sake. And give us a good night if it be Thy pleasure.'

On Thursday, September 2nd, Harvey watched with him through the night and heard him frequently say with much cheerfulness and fervour of spirit, 'God is good.' He would be willing to live and serve God and His people further. 'But my work is done. God will be with His people.' He was urged to take a potion and to try to sleep.

'It is not my design,' he answered, 'to drink or sleep; but my design is to make what haste I can to be gone.' September 3rd was the glorious thanksgiving day for Dunbar and the crowning mercy of Worcester. The victor lay calm and speechless, and between three and four in the afternoon he was dead. The grand life was over, a firm, consistent act of faith, a brave fight for righteousness, justice and mercy, a simple, humble, Christian life.

We are still striving to secure an administration as firm, as just, as incorruptible, as the Protector's, and to maintain a court as pure. The administrative machinery was for seven years absolutely honest, disinterested, and sound. There were no official abuses, no waste, no speculation. The whole power of the State was used on the side of sobriety, purity, cleanness of life and tongue. For the first and only time in Europe morality and religion were the sole qualifications insisted on by a Court. Cromwell was the first ruler of England whose service no vicious man might enter."

An old weekly publication, *The Commonwealth Mercury*, of September 9th,

1658, which lies before the writer, has the following:—"His most serene and renowned Highness Oliver Lord Protector, being, after a sickness of about fourteen days (which appeared an ague in the beginning), reduced to a very low condition of body, began early this morning to draw near the gate of death; and it pleased God about three a clock afternoon to put a period to his life. \* \*

His Wisdom and Piety in things divine, his Prudence in management of the civil affairs, and conduct of the military, and admirable successes in all, made him a prince indeed among the people of God, by whose prayers being lifted up to the supreme Dignity, he became more highly seated in their hearts; because in all his actings it was evident that the main design was to make his own interest one and the same with theirs, that it might be subserving to the great interest of Jesus Christ. And in the promoting of this his spirit knew no bounds, his affection could not be confined at home, but brake forth into foreign parts, where he was by good men universally admired as an extraordinary person raised up of God, and by them owned as the great Protector and Patron of the Evangelical Profession. This being said, and the World itself witness of it, I can onely adde, That God gave him blessings proportionable to all these vertues and made him a Blessing to us, by his wisdom and valor to secure our Peace and Liberty, and to revive the antient renown and reputation of our Native Country.

After all this, it is remarkable, how it pleased the Lord, on this day to take him to rest, it having formerly been a day of labors to him; for which both himself and the day (September 3rd) will be most renowned to posterity, it having been to him a day of Triumphs and Thanksgiving for the memorable Victories of Dunbar and Worcester; a day, which after so many strange Revolutions of Providence, high Contradictions, and wicked Conspiracies of unreasonable men, he lived once again to see, and then to die with great assurances and serenity of minde, peaceably in his Bed."



One of the earliest views of Acton :  
Showing the "Bank House," the residence of Lord Rous, Cromwell's Speaker and friend, on the left amongst the trees; while on the extreme right is seen "Lichfield House" and "Suffolk House," formerly the residences of the Garrick family.

These views, published at the time of his death, have their modern confirmation in the concluding sentences of Cromwell's Life by Dr. Horton:—"If England knew the day of her visitation and the things which make for her peace, she would raise the statue of Cromwell not only in Manchester, where the sole statue of Cromwell at present stands, but in every free and busy town, and she would write the principles of his administration on the minds of all her children. And at least she must in simple gratitude admit that the best things she to-day enjoys, the dearest liberties and the brightest hopes, she owes to that sternly-tender workman of God, Oliver Cromwell."

Returning to the narrative of local events, the Rev. Prebendary Harvey continues:—"While the good people of Acton were wondering what kind of minister their new Rector would be," succeeding the Rev. Philip Nye, "there came a Dr. Bruno Ryves, a Chaplain to Charles II. and Dean of Chichester. What kind of a man this Dr. Ryves was may be gathered in some degree from one or two of his acts. The Acton Parish Registers have been regularly kept ever since 1539, when it was so ordered by Thomas Cromwell, Vicar General to Henry VIII., and among them occurs the following:—

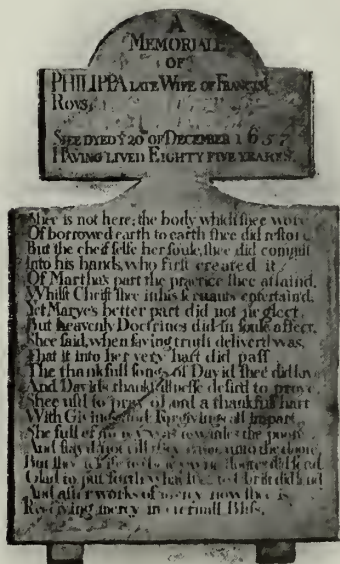
'Tuesday 5th April, 1655, Richard Meredith, Esq., was married to Mrs. Susannah Skippon, daughter to the Right Honourable Major-General Skippon, by Sir John Thorogood, in a public congregation, Mr. Philip Nye at the same time praying and teaching upon the occasion.'

Major-General Skippon, whose house is variously given as standing on the site where Acton House recently stood, or as being the earlier Derwent-water House, but which from the old plate appears as if it might have been between the two, was a distinguished officer at the head of one of Cromwell's armies, and Sir John Thorogood was a well known man on the same side. The Parish Church register has been defaced as follows: the words 'Right Honourable' have been crossed out,

Memorial in the Acton Parish Church to Philippa, wife of Lord Francis Rous, Speaker of the Little Parliament, showing the effacement of the original titles. From a recent photograph.

and under the name of Major-General Skippon has been written the word 'traytor,' and above the name of Sir John Thorogood has been written the word 'knave.' "There can be no doubt," says the Rev. Prebendary Harvey, "that this was done by Dr. Ryves, into whose hands the register fell on the ejection of Philip Nye."

Another mark of the tone and temper of Dr. Bruno Ryves is to be found in the fact that he had all the titles cut out or erased from the monument of Philippa, wife of Lord Rous, Provost of Eton, who was created a peer by Cromwell. This Dame Philippa Rous died at Bank House, not far from the church.





Another interesting old tablet, but one very difficult to reproduce from its being upon black marble and the lettering much faded with age, is that of Major-General Philip Skippon himself. While he resided in Acton, General Skippon lost his first wife (in 1655), and there is still to be seen in St. Mary's Church a tablet to her memory which he had inscribed :—

“In the sorrowful (yet most deserved) memory  
of His late worthy and well-beloved wife,  
Mrs. Mary Skippon, who passed through death  
to life the 24th day of the 11th month  
in the 54th of her age and after our marriage  
34 yeares.”

In Christ shee overcame  
And now with Christ doth reigne.”.



Tablet in Acton Parish Church to Major-General Philip Skippon.

In the early days of the Parliamentary struggle of 1642, Philip Skippon—who had served in the Palatinate in the early part of the Thirty Years' War and there distinguished himself—became Captain of the City train bands; and in May of that year outside the Moorgate, the Finsbury fields were white with the tents of the Parliamentary army, where he was preparing for the strenuous work that lay before them. He raised a guard for the protection of Parliament after the attempt of Charles I. to arrest the five members. At Turnham Green, when the King threatened London, Skippon appeared at the head of the train bands, and made an oration of which the burden was “pray heartily and fight heartily.”

When Sir Thomas Fairfax was made Commander-in-Chief instead of Essex, Skippon became Major-General, Cromwell acting as Lieutenant-General. At both battles of Newbury Skippon gained further distinction, but at the second of these he was dangerously wounded. Altogether he had a record of eminent service during the war.

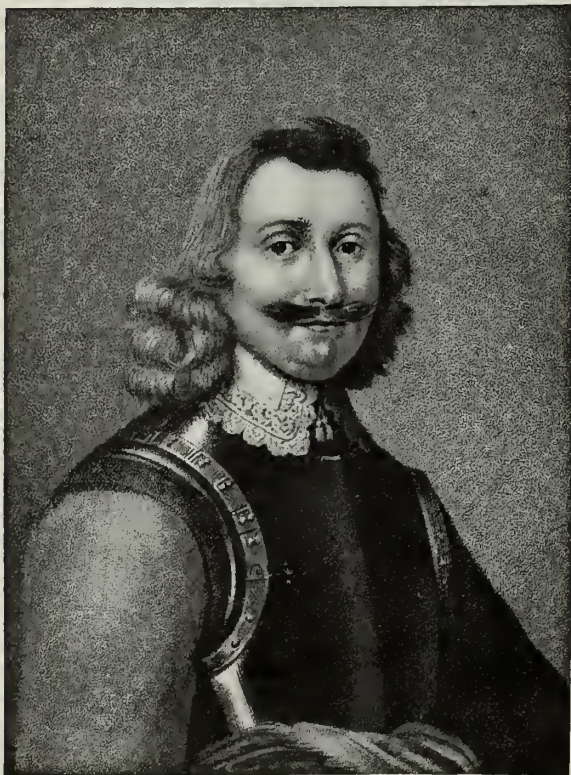
He was one of the Executive Council of State when Milton became its Secretary; and was appointed one of the King's Judges, but took no part in the proceedings of the Court.

As an author he wrote several devotional works for the benefit of his fellow soldiers. His death took place in the year 1660.

Lysons says:—"His house at Acton was near the church. In the year 1686, his son Sir Philip Skippon, . . . sold it to Sir Hele Hooke, Bart. The house appears to have been built in the year 1638, by Sir Henry Garway, and is now [1795] the property of James Stratton, Esq."

In an age when strong religious feeling, and all that belongs to its definite expression and common application to life, was the great moving force and found utterance in almost every conversation, and became the subject of many legislative enactments, it is not surprising that Francis Rous, "who divides with King David the honour of being the sweet psalmist of the Scottish people," but who was a Cornishman born at Halton near Saltash, should have taken a conspicuous part in the councils of the great psalm singing army of Cromwell.

Beginning as a writer of sonnets and poetry at Oxford, before he was twenty he published a poem



Major-General Philip Skippon.

"Thule, or Virtue's History." Graduating also at Leyden he entered the Temple, but subsequently settled in the country and wrote various theological works. In 1625 he became Member of Parliament for Truro, and attaining considerable prominence therein eight years afterwards was made Provost of Eton College. Although his translation of the Psalms in that year (1643) was not sanctioned by the English Parliament, after being revised by himself three years later, and altered by a Scottish Committee, it was adopted both by the General Assembly and the Scottish Parliament.

David Patrick writes:—"Like the Westminster Assembly's *Shorter Catechism*, also an English production, the metrical version of the Psalms became not merely part of the most cherished spiritual inheritance of the Scottish nation, but an important element in its intellectual education for more than two centuries.

A comparison will show how completely the so-called 'Scottish' version may still be regarded as the handiwork of the Old English Roundhead."

Rous had been from early manhood a staunch Puritan and Calvinistic controversialist: he was a member of Cromwell's Council of State, and in 1653 was Speaker of the Little Parliament.

He founded three Fellowships at Pembroke College, Oxford (his own College).

The Puritans esteemed him very highly, and the other party correspondingly abused him.

Shortly before his death he was created by Cromwell a Lord of Parliament.

The funeral of Lord Rous brought another great concourse of people to Acton. From an account which appeared at the time we learn that the Privy Council attended as well as numbers of the Admiralty Commissioners and army officers, and that Cromwell was himself represented.

The funeral procession started from Bank House his residence in Acton, and went by road all the way to Windsor, where he was buried in the chapel of Eton College, of which he was Provost.

His wife, who died two years before at the age of 85, was buried at Acton, as already noted in connection with her memorial. Lysons in 1795 wrote "On the site of Rous's house at Acton, now stands a Modern Mansion called Bank-house, the property of Samuel Wegg, Esq., in the right of his wife."

The quiet folk of Acton were now aroused by the sudden appearance in their midst of another famous man—Richard Baxter, the powerful preacher from Kidderminster. At the revolution he declined a bishopric, and asked permission to return as Lecturer to Kidderminster at £60 a year. He left the Church of Eng-



Lord Francis Rous, Speaker House of Commons.

land in May, 1662. He was one of a large number of clergy who refused to conform, *i.e.*, to sign the new Act of Uniformity which had been passed, and to act and teach in accordance with its spirit.

The date of his withdrawing to Acton was July 14th, 1663. He had then lived three years in London, and found it to agree neither with his health nor his studies. He betook himself, as he says, to live in the country at Acton, that he might set himself to writing.

He settled down in a small house just opposite the old church door. The great preacher was fifty years old, and his wife but a girl of twenty; yet despite the great difference in age they were a happy couple, the husband being devoted to "his dear angel," as he called his wife. Baxter was broken in health, but for all



that nothing could take away from him that sweet serenity which lighted up his face and showed his inner soul. An outcast from his own town for his religious principles, a man whose ill health made life a burthen, he now found comparative rest from strife for a time at Acton. He had before leaving Kidderminster published his celebrated work "Saints' Everlasting Rest," through which he is chiefly remembered now, and which will well repay the attention bestowed upon it by anyone, even though he differs most widely from the author. But even in Acton Baxter could not hold to his religious convictions without danger. One day he was preaching to a number of friends in his little house when suddenly a bullet whizzed through the room, "but by the mercy of God," he says, "it did to no one any harm," and he added, "we could never discover whence it came." Shortly after a lady came to Baxter and begged to be allowed to hear him preach; he readily gave his consent and appointed a time when she might come to him. But meanwhile he was informed that this lady was a spy who intended to bring him



General Skippon's House, Acton, 1644.

into trouble. "Thus by the special mercy and providence of God," he writes, "this danger was escaped also."

The year 1665 was a remarkable one. All round Acton the fields were scorched and withered, one great manor instead of yielding its forty loads of hay yielded four. On July 29th the plague, which had been raging some little time in London, broke out in the village. It was an awful visitation for the metropolis and its environs. Upwards of 8300 people fell victims every week; the people were so horrified and terror-stricken by the calamity that in many cases it was with difficulty they could be got to bury their dead. Altogether it swept off upwards of 100,000 people within one year. During the plague Baxter retired to Buckinghamshire with part of his family, where he was entertained by Richard Hampden. He remained in the country until the following March. "Then," he says, "I returned home, and found the churchyard like a ploughed field with

graves, and many of my neighbours dead, but that part of my family which I left were all safe, through the mercy of God, my merciful protector."

Next year the plague was followed by what seemed at the time yet another disaster, the Great Fire; but in reality it was a blessing. At midnight on September 2nd 1666 Baxter tells us the good people of Acton were roused from their beds by a terrible glare and by a sudden and ever increasing confusion in their highway. London was on fire—a strong breeze was blowing, and from house to house, and from road to road, the flames leapt, destroying everything in their path. The frightened booksellers of Paternoster Row hurried with the few books they had



Monument erected to the memory of Richard Baxter,  
in his native place, Kidderminster.

(Uphjohn Copyright).

time to collect to St. Paul's Cathedral and put them in the vaults there; but it was no use, the mighty edifice of St. Paul's was burned with the mean dwellings all around. Scorched leaves from books were carried by the wind to Acton, and, Baxter says, even as far as Windsor, twenty miles distant.

Pepys wrote in his diary September 5th 1666, of this destruction of Old London as follows :—

"About two in the morning my wife calls me up, and tells me of new cries of fire, it being come to Barking Church, which is at the bottom of our lane." After

taking Mrs. Pepys and his gold to a place of safety he returned to the scene of desolation. He continues: "But going to the fire, I find, by the blowing up of houses, and the great helpe given by the workmen out of the King's yards, sent up by Sir W. Pen, there is a good stop given to it, as well at Marke-Lane End as ours; it having only burned the dyall of Barking Church, and part of the porch, and was there quenched. I up to the top of Barking steeple, and there saw the saddest sight of desolation that I ever saw: everywhere great fires, oyle-cellars, and brimstone, and other things burning. I became afeard to stay there long, and therefore down again as fast as I could, the fire being spread as far as I could see it; and to Sir W. Pen's, and there eat a piece of cold meat."



Richard Baxter.

At this time Baxter became friends with another great man, the Lord Chief Justice Sir Mathew Hale, who then lived on or near the spot where "Acton House" recently stood at the corner of Horn Lane and Churchfield Road. The great Nonconformist and the brilliant lawyer used often to converse with each other on metaphysical subjects. And sometimes Sir Matthew Hale would stand near Baxter's door openly to listen to his preaching and to give him special encouragement. This displeased some people, who complained to the lawyer that it was not meet for him, an administrator of the law, thus to set himself against the laws.



"All this time it is worth remembering," says the Rev. Prebendary Harvey, "that Baxter never gave up the habit of going to the Parish Church to receive the Holy Communion and to hear the sermon of the curate, whom he describes as a weak young man, rather fond of frequenting the alehouses. After preaching himself in his own house, he tells us he was wont to take his friends to Church with him, scarcely three in the parish refusing. What a picture this is of unity! Would that we could say as much now. Dr. Ryves, however, the rector who was non-resident, gradually became jealous of the great preacher of Kidderminster, and at length had him sent to Clerkenwell gaol for holding a conventicle, *i.e.* for holding public worship in his house. The people of Acton were consequently greatly enraged, and never forgave the rector who had thus proved himself a selfish persecutor."

Baxter was a man deeply instructed, and yet not strictly of the highly learned: "my faults," said he, "are no disgrace to any university, for I was of none; I have little but what I had out of books, and inconsiderable helps of country tutors. Weakness and pain helped me to study how to die; that set me on studying on how to live."

Equipped for the most momentous work with sound heart, keen intellect, penetrating judgment and much of the persuasive power which only reaches its best and most beneficent exercise when divinely directed, but not willing to sacrifice principle or pander to the caprice of men or to court any ignoble popularity, he was a man like all the greatest heroes of human liberty, broad in sympathy, with love of truth, righteousness and good will to all men, and yet like the greatest of mankind in measure subject to prejudice and the limitations or even misconceptions which arise from human environment and the atmosphere or spirit of the age in which they live. It may seem to us strange, if not almost incredible, that the saintly Baxter should join with others, even eminent minds of the period, in feeling that a repudiation of all belief in the doctrine of "witchcraft" was little better than blank infidelity. Yet such was the case, and when hearing the strange report of the "Goodwin Children," who in Salem, New England, were supposed to be suffering from witches, he said, "The evidence is so convincing that he must be a very obdurate Sadducee who will not believe."

It may help us to-day to realise that the supposed "good old times" had their terrible evils and unspeakable tragedies, and to be thankful for the blessings of the present, if we recollect that so recently as the time of Baxter, even in those new colonies sought out for liberty of conscience—large numbers of the most worthy and honest folk of that peaceful little town of Salem after being "cried out upon," and charged with witchcraft by these children, were tried, and generally, unless they made a false confession, convicted: and there on "Gallows Hill," now having round its base the clustered factories and homes of a thriving population, "looming up against the summer clouds of 1692" nineteen of these innocent persons were hanged by the neck till they were dead.

One of the last of these terrible tragedies was the end of Giles Cory, immortalised in one of Longfellow's later poems—a stout hearted old farmer of more than eighty-one years, whose godly wife, one of the nineteen referred to above, "protesting her innocence, concluded her life with an eminent prayer upon the ladder." This old man, put to death by being laid upon his back and having stones piled upon him, who braved "the utmost torture that the human frame can bear, until his body was crushed, and his unconquered spirit fled for ever away," is the subject of the following lines from a New England ditty of that time:—

" Giles Cory was a wizzard strong,  
 A stubborn wretch was he ;  
 And fitt was he to hang on high  
 Upon ye Locust Tree.  
 So when before ye Magistrates  
 For tryall he did come,  
 He would no true confession make,  
 But was compleately dumbe.  
 ' Giles Corey ' said ye Magistrate.  
 ' What hast thou heare to pleade  
 To these who now accuse thy soule  
 Of Crymes and horrid deed ? '

Giles Corey, he sayde not a word :  
 No single word spake he .  
 ' Giles Corey ' sayth ye Magistrate,  
 ' We'll press it out of thee.'  
 They got them then a heavy beam ;  
 They layde it on his breast ;  
 They loaded it with heavy stones ;  
 And hard upon him prest.  
 ' More weight,' now sayd this wretched man :  
 ' More weight,' again he cryed.  
 And he did no confession make ;  
 But wickedlie he dyed."



Rev. Bruno Ryves, D.D.

While Baxter, in his " Dying Thoughts," wrote, " I have many convincing proofs of witches, the contracts they have made with devils, and the power they have received from them ;" in this his mistaken opinion he but illustrates another passage from his own writings of more mature thought :—" I now see more good and more evil in all men than heretofore I did. I see that good men are not so good as I once thought they were, but have more imperfections ; and that nearer approach and fuller trial doth make the best appear more weak and more faulty than their admirers at a distance think. And I find that few are so bad as either malicious enemies or censorious separating professors do imagine. In some indeed I find that human nature is corrupted into a greater likeness to devils than I once thought any on earth had been. But even in the wicked usually there is more for grace to make advantage of, and more to testifie for God and holiness, than I once believed there had been."

Rowland Allen also writes :—  
 " The frenzies which have generally laid hold of the popular mind have been unable to assail the best and loftiest spirits of the age. Far over

the surging error these clear-eyed watchers have sent forth a voice of wisdom, to guard men against the threatening storm. But, in our studies of the witchcraft delusion, we discover no such pleasing relief. Rare spirits, the most gifted minds of the age in which they lived, have all been involved in this great ocean of error, which at one time enveloped the world. In 1665, Sir Matthew Hale, who was universally admired for the purity of his character, and his varied

and ample culture, presided at a trial in Suffolk County, England, which condemned two witches. The proceedings at this court, both on the part of the judge and the accusers, seemed to be patterns of what followed at Salem. The afflicted fell in fearful convulsions upon the floor. They were dumb and deaf and blind in turn, or all at once. They clenched their hands so furiously that the strongest men could not open them; but, if by chance they barely touched the accused, on a sudden they would fly apart, and the sufferers would utter piercing shrieks.

In order to see that this was not a counterfeit distemper and cure, several honoured gentlemen took a child, while she was in her fit, to the farther part of the hall, and then conveyed Amy Duny, one of the accused, from the bar out towards the suffering maid. Having blinded her eyes with an apron, a third person touched her hand as though he was the accused. It produced the same effect as the touch



Ancient High Street (now re-built).  
Old Baxter House, first gabled building on the left side.

of the witch did, before the court! 'whereupon the gentlemen returned, protesting that they did believe the whole transaction of this business was a mere imposture.' Notwithstanding this, the prisoners were condemned. Sir Thomas Browne, a name of unrivalled celebrity in his time, appeared in the midst of this trial, and, having been invited to address the court, in an elaborate and ardent speech threw the whole weight of his powerful influence against the accused, and in favour of the reality of witchcraft. There seemed to be but one verdict from all concerned.

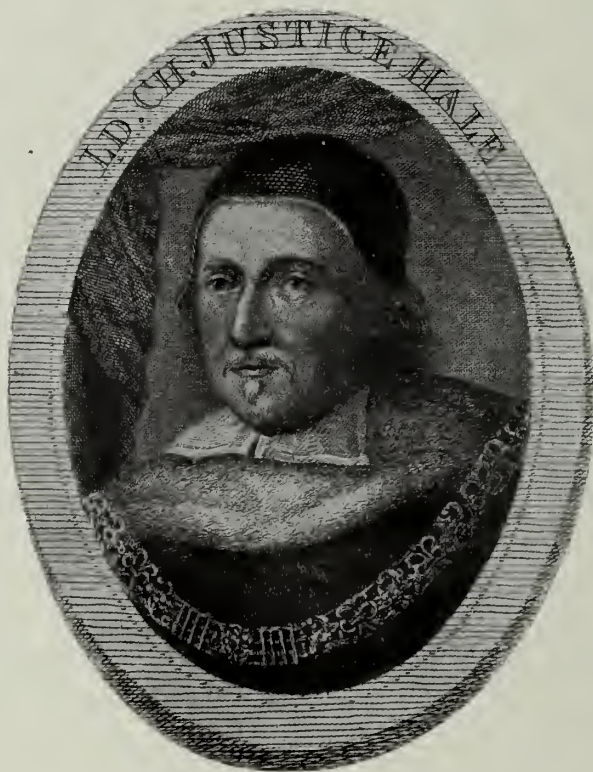
Reports of this famous trial were found in New England in 1692. There is no doubt but that it was regarded as the main text-book at the Salem court."

The Salem victims were not the last thus to suffer or to be put to death under this dreadful delusion, for in Germany it continued long after, even to 1749—and



"in England alone it is computed that no fewer than thirty thousand" reputed witches condemned to be burned suffered at the stake; and this although in all history there is not one accredited instance of the "crime" of witchcraft, as then understood, having any basis in actual fact.

Our valued townsman, Mr. Walter Adam Brown, in one of his interesting lectures makes the following reference to these "two very extraordinary men who came to live in Acton"—Baxter and Hale. "Richard Baxter first occupied a small house (long since pulled down) opposite the Church door. The site of that old



Lord Chief Justice Hale.

house is commonly reputed to be included in the ground on the north side of the Church and now walled in. He was introduced to the Lord Chief Baron through sitting in Church next to Sergeant Fountain, a mutual friend. The house was small and inconvenient, but it must have had some attraction for the Judge, for, after enquiring if Baxter had any objection to go out of it, he bought it in 1670, and lived and died there. There must have been a wonderful charm in the character of Baxter to have attracted the friendship of a man like Matthew Hale. His rugged stubborn earnestness and honest independence somehow fascinated the Judge, and they became bosom friends. Holding different opinions on many points they

agreed to differ, and there is little doubt that Baxter was as much charmed with the Judge as the Judge was with Baxter. It is said that Matthew Hale was slow of speech, but an excellent listener; and that may be one reason why Baxter loved him. I venture to think that to be a good listener requires as much ability as to be a good speaker. The art of listening (instead of pretending to listen and leading a speaker to suppose you are following with the deepest interest all that he tells you, and all the time not caring two straws for what he is talking about) is a special gift that comes to few and is invaluable; it is a gift that many of us ought to cultivate."

Baxter, himself, thus recalls his first acquaintance with Judge Hale, the incident of his purchase of Baxter's house, and his death:—"We sat next each other in Church many weeks, but neither did he ever speak to me nor I to him. At last my extraordinary friend (to whom I was more beholden than I must here express) Sergeant Fountain, asked me why I did not visit the Lord Chief Baron. I told him because I had no reason for it, being a stranger to him, and some against it, namely, that a judge whose reputation was necessary to the ends of his office should not be brought under Court suspicion or disgrace by his familiarity with a person whom the interest and diligence of some prelates had rendered so odious (as I knew myself to be with such), I durst not be so injurious to him. The Sergeant answered: 'It is not meet for him to come first to you; I know why I speak it; let me entreat you to go first to him.' In obedience to which request I did it, and we entered into neighbourly familiarity. I lived then in a small house, but it had a pleasant garden and back side, which the honest landlord had a desire to sell. The judge had a mind to the house, but he would not meddle with it till he got a stranger to me to come and inquire of me whether I was willing to leave it. I told him I was not only willing but desirous, not for my own ends, but for my landlord's sake, who must needs sell it; and so he bought it, and lived in that poor house till his mortal sickness sent him to the place of his interment."

Baxter had taken the side of the Parliament in the Civil War, and as Chaplain in the Army was present at the sieges of Bridgwater, Exeter, Bristol, and Worcester. But he disliked "extreme views, political and religious and vehement disputes about liberty of conscience."

On leaving the army he spent fourteen years amongst his old parishioners at Kidderminster. Of this period Lord Brougham wrote:—

"His two most popular treatises, 'The Saints' Everlasting Rest' and 'A Call to the Unconverted' were published before he left Kidderminster, and raised his fame as a writer to a higher pitch than what he had enjoyed even as a preacher. A severe affliction, caught in a cold and snowy season, and in which he lost a gallon of blood, flowing at the nose, led him to write the first work just named. Five months he was laid aside, and in that time of bodily prostration and mental vigour he penned that immortal production. His own beautiful account of the origin of the work is as follows:—'When I was in health I had not the least thought of writing books or of serving God in any more public way than by preaching. But when I was weakened with great bleeding and left solitary in my chamber at Sir John Cook's in Derbyshire, without any acquaintance but my servant about me, and was sentenced to death by my physicians, I began to contemplate more seriously that everlasting rest which I apprehended myself to be just on the borders of, and that my thoughts might not scatter too much in my meditation I began to write something on that subject, intending but the quantity of a sermon or two; but being continued longer by weakness, where I had no books except the Bible and Concordance, I followed it on till it was enlarged to this book.' This

memorable work was first published during the time of the Commonwealth, and in that edition, among the saints whom he said he expected to meet with in the everlasting rest, he mentioned the names of the illustrious patriots, Hampden, Pym, and Lord Brook. At the Restoration, Dr. Lane, the censor, refused to license the publication of any more editions, unless the names of these distinguished men, now called traitors, were struck out. Baxter unhappily consented to their omission, though retaining still his sentiments respecting them. This circumstance, if not a blot upon his firmness, is at least an impeachment of his sense of what is due to the immortal dead. Not all the censors in the universe could blot out their names from the true everlasting rest—still, the omission of their names from that volume was a slur upon men to whom Britain owes so much for her civil and religious liberties."

During the comparative quiet of his years spent in Acton much time was given to study and literary work.

The "*Reliquae Baxterianae*," mainly his autobiography, the great authority for his life it is said was to a great extent composed here. There are three parts, of which the first part was written mainly in 1664, the second in 1665, and most of the third in 1670. This work was published in 1696 by his intimate friend Mr. Matthew Sylvester.

When the Act against Conventicles was suffered to lapse, Baxter suddenly got such congregations in Acton that he lacked room for them, and they continued constant in their attendance. Dr. Ryves now got a warrant and had him apprehended for preaching. Baxter says, "The whole town of Acton was greatly exasperated against the Dean when I was going to prison." This imprisonment, he adds, brought him "the great loss of converse with Judge Hale, for the Parliament in the next Act against Conventicles put into it divers clauses suited to my case, by which I was obliged to go dwell in another county, and to forsake both London and my former habitation, and yet the Justices of another county were partly enabled to pursue me." He obtained in the end honourable dismissal from his judges.

During the exciting period of the Civil War Baxter had taken a middle course between the extremes of either side, and strove to act as a moderating influence.

"He was connected with both the opposite parties in the State, and yet was the partisan of neither. His attachment to monarchy was well known, though his adherence to the Royalist party was not so certain; while the deep stream of religious feeling which ran through the conversation of the Parliamentarians drew his sympathies to that side. The undisguised respect paid by him to the character of some of the Puritans, made him and many others who were sincerely attached to the crown, the objects of jealousy and persecution.

A clamour was raised against them, and the rabble, whose excesses had been checked by him, were eager enough to become the trumpeters of the charge. During one of these ebullitions of party excitement Baxter spent a few days in the Parliamentary army, and was preaching within sound of the cannon when the memorable battle was fought at Edge Hill. His friends, not considering it safe for him to return to Kidderminster, he retired to Coventry, where he lived two years, preaching regularly to the Parliamentary garrison and to the inhabitants. After the battle of Naseby, in 1645, he passed a night on a visit to some friends in Cromwell's army, a circumstance which led to the chaplaincy of Colonel Whalley's regiment being offered to him, which, after consulting his friends at Coventry, he accepted," and, as already mentioned, held for some time.

He was prepared for the putting down of "bishops and liturgy and ceremonies," but later was scandalised to find that "Cromwell believed in liberty



of conscience, and in leaving every man not only to hold but to preach what views he pleased;” nevertheless Baxter was still able to find fellowship with those from whom he strongly differed.

It is not surprising therefore that he and Chief Justice Hale could, even at the door of Baxter’s house, have a real fellowship and sharing of the divine life and grace, notwithstanding what separating and persecuting prescriptions might enjoin.

Is it not lamentable that their example and that of countless other saintly lives which have followed them, should yet be unavailing to bring the majority to that holy tolerance which great souls find and know as they come into the life and teaching of the living Christ? Too little indeed of unity in essentials there has ever been; and yet the extent to which it has existed in modern Acton has been an influence for good in education, temperance, peace, and towards the purity and progress of our town.

To refer again to the criticisms of the life practice of the Lord Chief Justice in listening to Baxter’s preaching, an incident given by Professor A. B. Bruce in his “Training of the Twelve,” indicates that the people of Acton two and a half centuries ago had been awakened to the seriousness of religious life and conduct which was the watchword and the strength of that mighty revolution under Cromwell; but which alone was liable to degenerate into censoriousness, if not indeed to lose the grace of Christ-likeness through an intolerant spirit or sourness of disposition.

“As an illustration of what this way of judging leads to,” writes Professor

Bruce, “one little fact in the history of the celebrated Sir Matthew Hale, whose ‘Contemplations’ are familiar to all readers of devout literature, may be here introduced. Richard Baxter relates that the good people in the part of the country where the distinguished judge resided, after his retirement from the judicial bench, did not entertain a favourable opinion of his religious character, their notion being



Old fireplace in Baxter’s second Acton house, formerly on the site now occupied by the London, City and Midland Bank.

(Upjohn, Copyright)

that he was certainly a very moral man, but *not converted*. It was a serious conclusion to come to about a fellow creature, and one is curious to know on what so solemn a judgment is based. The author of "The Saints' Rest" gives us the needful information on this momentous point. The pious folks about Acton, he tells us, ranked the ex-judge among the unconverted, because he did not frequent their private weekly prayer meetings. It was the old story of the twelve and the exorcist under a new puritanic form. Baxter, it is needless to say, did not sympathise with the harsh, uncharitable opinion of his less enlightened brethren. His thoughts breathed the gentle, benignant, humble, charitable spirit of Christian maturity. 'I,' he adds after relating the fact above stated, 'I that have heard and read his serious expression of the concernments of eternity, and seen his love to all good men, and the blamelessness of his life, thought better of his piety than of my own.'"

In the journals of "Friends" of this period there are references to appeals made to the Chief Justice:—"I went to Judge Hale's house at Acton," writes George Whitehead, "(and our Friend Ellis Hooks with me), where we met with the Judge at home, and I intimated our case and difficulty to him respecting reaching Friends in distant prisons, who had been pardoned by Charles II. in 1672."

The reference here made is to the time when the King published his Declaration of Indulgence to Dissenters. This, to a considerable extent, checked the violent persecution to which Friends had been subjected, but failed to bring liberty to the large numbers then in prison. The condition of these prisoners rested so heavily on George Whitehead's heart that he resolved to do his utmost to secure their liberation. His efforts on this occasion are well worth recounting, and may stand as an example of much that he subsequently accomplished in the same direction. Having obtained an interview with King Charles, George Whitehead pleaded so successfully for Friends that the King said, "I'll pardon them." Pursuant to this an order was issued for the release of nearly 500 Friends and some other Dissenters, among whom was John Bunyan. A remission of fines and release of forfeited estates was also secured. Not content with this, George Whitehead succeeded in getting the pardon, though comprehending so many names, passed through the various Government offices as one pardon and for one fee. The next difficulty was to have the pardon made operative. It might be supposed that this would have been the duty of some government department. Not so, however. It devolved upon George Whitehead and his friends, and proved to be a work involving much thought and labour. The document containing the pardon was a bulky one, "there being eleven skins of vellum in chancery hand; it was swelled to that bigness by reason the names of above 400 persons were repeated eleven times over in it." To present this to officials in all parts of England was certainly no easy matter.

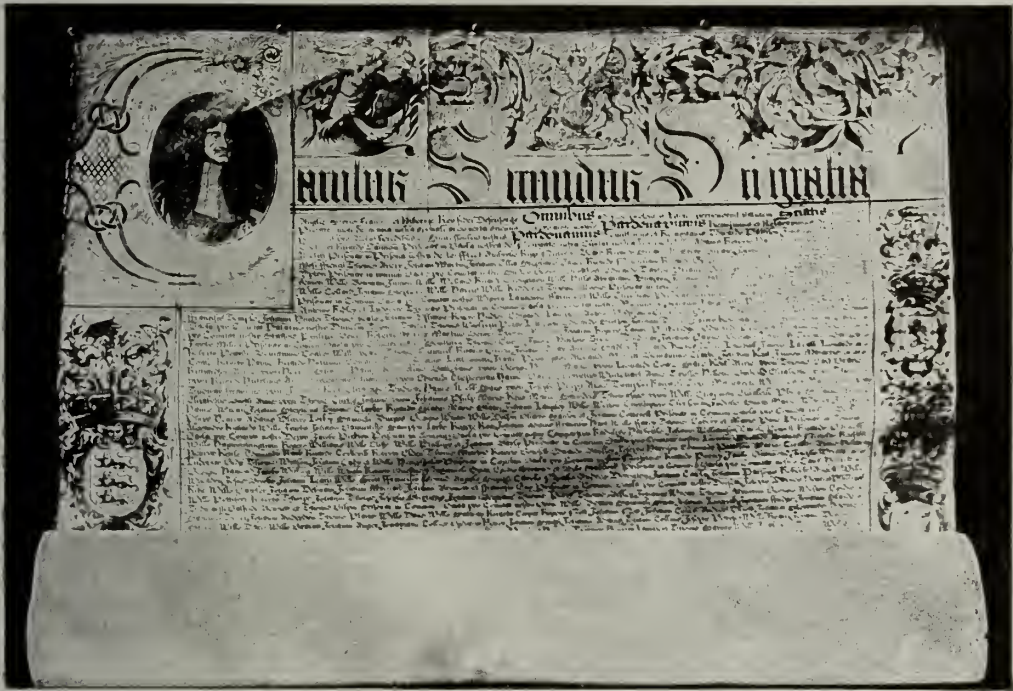
The difficulty was surmounted in the following manner. Two copies of the pardon were prepared, and these and the original were sent out by faithful messengers to sheriffs and gaolers, east, west, and south. George Whitehead shared the work of publishing it, riding with two other companions into Essex, Suffolk, and other adjoining counties. Of the nature of this task we may judge from a sentence in which, speaking of the Letters Patent, he says they were so "big and cumbersome in a leathern case, and tin box, and great seal, that Edward Man was so cumbered with carrying it, hanging by his side, that he was fain to tie it across the horse's back behind him." There still remained the remote counties to deal with, and it was a difficult matter to find messengers who could go to them.

It so happened, however, that the Michaelmas term was just at hand, when the Under Sheriffs came up to London from all parts of England; and George

Whitehead was able, by waiting upon them at their lodgings, and submitting the pardon to them there, to accomplish fairly easily what would otherwise have involved much labour and weeks of travelling.

The respite thus obtained was, however, of short duration, and persecution began again in 1673.

Returning again to Baxter, he disapproved Cromwell's assuming supreme power and said to him "the honest people of the land took their ancient monarchy to be a blessing and not an evil. . . . We intended not to dig down the banks, or pull up the hedge, and lay all waste and common, when we desired the prelates' tyranny might cease." He was appointed one of the royal chaplains after the Restoration and offered by Clarendon a bishopric: but, like Owen, he was unable



Charter of release, or "Pardon," granted by Charles II.

to accept the latter. A keen controversialist, he was at the same time a singularly large hearted man. After a lifetime of study he had come, he said in 1675, to "perceive that most of the doctrinal controversies amongst Protestants are far more about equivocal words than matter; and it wounded my soul to perceive what work both tyrannical and unskilful disputing clergymen had made these thirteen hundred years in the world."

To quote again from Lord Brougham: "In the formation of his theological opinions, Baxter seems to have been completely untrammelled. He made no account of the party names around which so many battles have been fought. As the terms are usually understood, he can be called neither a Calvinist nor an Arminian. To the study of the Sacred Books he brought not only a holy life, but a powerful and independent mind, and he never asked himself whether or not his



individual conclusions were in harmony with the accepted formularies of this or that theological school. He was so much of what was called an Arminian that he believed in universal redemption, or that there was a sufficiency in the atonement to secure the salvation of all, if all would accept of it; he was so much of a Calvinist as to believe in personal election, and therefore, like many others who have sought to combine the features of opposing systems, he pleased neither party. What is called moderate Calvinism, which is now professed by the great majority of evangelists in and out of the Established Church, comes nearest to the Baxterianism. This great man will be admired even by those who dissent from his opinions, for having emancipated himself from the trammels of party, and stating his views of divine truth in his own way, putting together what he thought to be the disjointed limbs of truth which each party claimed as the whole truth. These theories rebuked alike the ultra-Calvinist and the violent Arminian; and although at first they both turned upon him in resentment, they have each been approaching nearer and nearer to the ground on which he took his stand."

In the year 1672 the Act of Indulgence allowed him to settle in London and divide his time between preaching and writing.

"The literary career of Baxter is not the least extraordinary part of his history. He published a body of practical and polemical divinity with a rapidity almost unequalled; the excellence of some of his practical writings secured them an unexampled popularity, and thus laid the foundation of a new theological system which still retains his name. . . . Bishop Wilkins praised him in the phrase that Johnson afterwards applied to Goldsmith: 'he has cultivated every subject which he has handled'; and Dr. Isaac Barrow said, 'his practical writings were never mended, and his controversial ones seldom confuted.'"

In the year 1682 the officers of the law burst into his house, when he was under severe indisposition, with a warrant to seize his person for coming within five miles of a corporation, and would have haled him away but for the interference of his physician, whose action "probably saved his life as well as obtained his pardon."

When in 1685 he published a Paraphrase on the New Testament he was tried before the infamous judge Jeffreys, who, when Baxter endeavoured to speak, cried out: "Richard! Richard! dost thou think we'll hear thee poison the court? Richard, thou art an old fellow, an old knave; thou hast written books enough to load a cart. Hadst thou been whipt out of thy writing trade forty years ago it had been happy."

Baxter had been brought to court in a very precarious state of health, and his counsel had moved that further time might be given him to prepare for his defence; on which the brute of a judge cried out in a passion, "I'll not give him a minute more to save his life. We have had to do with all sorts of persons, and now we have a saint, and I know how to deal with saints as well as sinners." He also added, "he was sorry that the Act of Indemnity disabled him from hanging him."

Sentenced to pay five hundred marks, and in default to be imprisoned in the King's Bench until it was paid, Baxter was thus confined for nearly eighteen months, until 26th September, 1686. As in his previous imprisonments, the devotion of his wife was a great comfort to him in his enforced solitude. Through the generous exertions of a catholic peer, Lord Powis, the fine was remitted and his pardon obtained.

The end of his eventful life was full of rest, and after five years of tranquillity he died "in great peace and joy" on the 8th of December, 1691, and was buried in Christ Church, Newgate.

The death of Sir Matthew Hale had taken place fifteen years earlier. It was noteworthy that in connection with each of these eminent men there had been a brief period in their early experience, when an entirely different kind of life had for each of them a transient attraction. In the case of Baxter it had led him even to try his fortune at court. Theology was thrown aside, he went up to Whitehall, was specially introduced to Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels, as an aspirant to royal favour, and had a courteous and favourable reception. For one month he mingled in the festivities of the palace—a period which was sufficient to convince him of the unsuitableness of such a mode of life to his tastes, his habits and his conscience; he then returned home, and resumed his studies with a determination never to be again diverted from them.



Old St. Mary's Church, Acton, in 1838.

Possibly showing in the rear the site of the first house occupied by Richard Baxter.

Hale had been deprived of both his parents before he was five years of age. In the quaint language of one of his early biographers we read: "Great care was taken of his Education, and his Guardian intended to breed him to be a Divine, and being inclined to the way of those then called Puritans, put him to some Schools that were Taught by those of that party, and in the 17th year of his Age, sent him to Magdalen-Hall in Oxford, where Obadiah Sedgwick was his Tutor. He was an extraordinary Proficient at School, and for some time at Oxford. But the Stage Players coming thither, he was so much corrupted by seeing many Playes, that he almost wholly forsook his Studies. By this, he not only lost much time, but found that his Head came to be thereby filled with such vain Images of things, that they were at best Unprofitable, if not hurtful to him; and being afterwards sensible of the Mischief of this, he resolved upon his coming to London (where he knew the opportunities of such Sightings would be more frequent and Inviting) never to see a Play again, to which he constantly adhered."

The world of fashion and gaiety in his case also attracted him for a short period, continuing to draw him off from his studies; but, as Bishop Burnet writes, he “still preserved his Purity, and a great Probity of Mind. But since the honour of reclaiming him from the idleness of his former course of Life, is due to the memory of that Eminent Lawyer Serj. Glanvil, and since my design in Writing is to propose a Pattern of Heroick Virtue to the World, I shall mention one passage of the Serjeant which ought never to be forgotten. His Father had a fair Estate, which he intended to settle on his Elder Brother, but he being a Vicious young Man, and there appearing no hopes of his recovery, he settled it on him, that was his Second Son. Upon his Death his Eldest Son finding that what he had before looked on, as the threatenings of an angry Father, was now but too certain, became Melancholly, and that by degrees wrought so great a change on him, that what his Father could not prevail in while he Lived, was now effected by the severity of his last Will, so that it was now too late for him to change in hopes of any estate that was gone from him. But his Brother observing the reality of the change, resolved within himself what to do: So he called him, with many of his Friends together to a Feast, and after other dishes had been served up to the Dinner, he ordered one that was covered to be set before his Brother, and desired him to uncover it; which he doing, the Company was surprised to find it full of Writings. So he told them that he was now to do, what he was sure his Father would have done, if he had lived to see that happy change, which they now all saw in his Brother: and therefore he freely restored to him the whole Estate. This is so great an instance of a Generous and just Disposition, that I hope the Reader will easily pardon this Digression, and that the rather, since that Worthy Serjeant was so instrumental in the happy Change that followed in the course of Mr. Hale’s life.

Yet he did not at first break off from keeping too much Company with some vain People, till a sad Accident drove him from it, for he with some other young Students, being invited to be merry out of Town, one of the Company called for so much Wine, that notwithstanding all that Mr. Hale could do to prevent it, he went on in his Excess till he fell down as dead before them, so that all that were present, were not a little affrighted at it, who did what they could to bring him to himself again: This did particularly affect Mr. Hale, who thereupon went into another Room, and shutting the door, fell on his Knees, and prayed earnestly to God, both for his Friend, that he might be restored to Life again; and that himself might be forgiven for giving such Countenance to so much Excess: and he vowed to God, that he would never again keep Company in that manner, nor drink a health while he lived: His Friend recovered, and he most Religiously observed his Vow, till his Dying day. And though he was afterwards pressed to drink Healths, particularly the King’s, which was set up by too many as a distinguishing mark of Loyalty, and drew many into great Excess after his Majesty’s happy Restoration; but he would never dispense with his Vow, though he was sometimes roughly treated for this, which some hot and indiscreet Men called Obstinacy.

This wrought an entire change on him: now he forsook all vain Company, and divided himself between the Duties of Religion, and the Studies of his Profession; in the former he was so regular, that for Six and thirty years time, he never once failed going to Church on the Lord’s day; this observation he made when an Ague first interrupted that constant Course, and he reflected on it, as an Acknowledgement of God’s great goodness to him, in so long a Continuance of his health.”



It required more than usual courage and a firm adherence to principle for one in such high office as that of Lord Chief Justice to take the stand he did "when the reign of licentiousness commenced, upon the restoration of Charles II., and drinking the King's health to intoxication was considered as one of the tests of loyalty in politics, and of orthodoxy in religion." If progress from those often mis-called "good old times" has been but slow, the greatness of the change already effected is witnessed by the fact that the mayoral banquet was given in 1911 for the first time in history without the use of intoxicating liquors.

Hale's progress in legal studies was rapid, and justified Serjeant Granvill's expectations of him; and now the Attorney-General (Noy) took particular notice of him, advising and assisting him in his studies. He also became intimate with Selden, and was "induced by the advice and example of this great man to extend his reading beyond the contracted sphere of his professional studies, to enlarge and strengthen his reasoning powers by philosophical inquiries, and to store his mind with a variety of general knowledge. The variety of his pursuits at this period of



The Old High Street, Acton.  
Showing site of the ancient "Stocks" by gateway on the right.

life was remarkable: anatomy, physiology, and divinity formed part only of his extensive course of reading; and by his subsequent writings it is made manifest that his knowledge of these subjects was by no means superficial."

He probably commenced the actual practice of his profession about the year 1636. Bishop Burnet, who published a life of Hale six years after his death, says: "When he was called to the *Barr*, and began to make a Figure in the World, the late unhappy Wars, broke out, in which it was no easie thing for a Man to preserve his integrity, and to live securely, free from great danger and trouble"; and he adds, "Many that have conversed much with him have told me they never heard him once speak ill of any person." He also says "that Hale was Assigned Counsel for Lord Strafford in 1640, and in 1643 he was expressly appointed by both Houses of Parliament as counsel for Archbishop Laud, and was employed in his practice

by all the King's party." Referring to his appointment as one of the Commission for the reformation of the law, Lord Brougham says:—"A comparison of the machinery of Courts of Justice during the reign of Charles I., and their practice and general conduct during the Commonwealth, and immediately after the Restoration, will afford convincing proofs that, during the interregnum improvements of great importance were effected—improvements which must have been devised, matured, and carried into execution by minds of no common wisdom, devoted to the subject with extraordinary industry and reflection.

It was unquestionably with the view of restoring a respect for the administration of justice, which had been wholly lost during the reign of Charles I., and giving popularity and moral strength to his own government, that Cromwell determined to place such men as Hale on the benches of the different courts. Hale, however, had at first many scruples concerning the propriety of acting under a commission from an usurper; and it was not without much hesitation, that he at length yielded to the importunity of Cromwell, and the urgent advice and entreaties of his friends; who, thinking it no small security to the nation to have a man of his integrity and high character on the bench, spared no pains to satisfy his conscientious scruples. He was made a serjeant, and raised to the bench of the Court of Common Pleas in January, 1653-54.

Soon after he became a judge he was returned to Cromwell's first parliament of five months, as one of the knights of the shire for the county of Gloucester; but he does not appear to have taken a very active part in the proceedings of that assembly. Burnet says that 'he, with a great many others, came to parliaments, more out of a design to hinder mischief than to do much good.' On one occasion, however, he did a service to his country, for which all subsequent generations have reason to be grateful, by opposing the proposition of a party of frantic enthusiasts to destroy the records in the Tower and other depositories, as remnants of feudality and barbarism. Hale displayed the folly, injustice, and mischief of this proposition with such authority and clearness of argument, that he carried the opinions of all reasonable members with him; and in the end those who had introduced the measure were well satisfied to withdraw it.

That his political opinions at this time were not republican, is evident from a motion introduced by him, that the legislative authority should be affirmed to be in the parliament and an individual with powers limited by the parliament; but that the military power should for the present remain with the Protector. He had no seat in the second parliament of the Protectorate, called in 1656; but when a new parliament was summoned upon the death of Cromwell, in January, 1658-59. he represented the University of Oxford.

His judicial conduct, during the Commonwealth, is represented by contemporaries of all parties as scrupulously just, and nobly independent. Several instances are related of his resolute refusal to submit the free administration of the law to the arbitrary dictation of the Protector. On one occasion of this kind, which occurred on the circuit, a jury had been packed by express directions from Cromwell. Hale discharged the jury on discovering the circumstance, and refused to try the cause. When he returned to London, the Protector severely reprimanded him, telling him that 'he was not fit to be a judge;' to which Hale only replied that 'it was very true.'

Hale remained a Judge of the Common Pleas until the death of Cromwell; but when a new commission from Richard Cromwell was offered to him it was declined nor could the influence of other judges and personal friends prevail upon him to alter his resolution that he "could act no longer under such authority."

“He lived a private man,” says Burnet, “till the Parliament met that called home the King (Charles II.) to which he was returned Knight of the Shire from the county of Gloucester. It appeared at that time how much he was beloved and esteemed in his Neighbourhood; for though another, who stood in Competition with him, had spent a Thousand pounds to procure voices, a great Sum to be employed that way in those days, and he had been at no cost; and was so far from soliciting it, that he had stood out long against those who pressed him to appear,



A Timber Saw Pit of Old Acton, from Original of Mr. S. Walker.

and he did not promise to appear till three days before the Election, yet he was preferred.” Hale now proposed that a committee should be appointed that they might form reasonable conditions to be sent over to the King, and had not other counsels prevailed most of the destructive errors of the reign of Charles II. would have been spared, as well as the necessity for another revolution within thirty years from the Restoration. Burnet adds: “In that Parliament he bore his share and



his influence was exerted toward moderation, and his prudence and excellent temper led him to think that the sooner an Act of Indemnity were passed, and the fuller it were of graces and favours, it would sooner settle the nation, and quiet the minds of the People; and therefore he applied himself with a particular care to the framing and carrying it on: in which it was visible he had no concern of his own, but merely his love of the Publick that set him on to it."

And Lord Brougham continues: "Immediately after the restoration of the King in May, 1660, Lord Clarendon, being appointed Lord Chancellor, sought to give strength and stability to the new government, by carefully providing for the due administration of justice. With this view, he placed men distinguished for their learning and high judicial character upon the benches of the different courts. Amongst other eminent lawyers, who had forsaken their profession during the latter period of the Commonwealth, he determined to recall Hale from his retirement, and offered him the appointment of Lord Chief Baron.

But it was not without great difficulty that Hale was induced to return to the labours of public life. A curious original paper, containing his 'reasons why he desired to be spared from any place of public employment,' was published some years ago by Mr. Hargrave, in the preface to his collection of law tracts. Amongst these reasons, which were stated with the characteristic simplicity of this great man, he urged 'the smallness of his Estate, being not above 500*l* per annum, six children unprovided for, and a debt of 1000*l* lying upon him; that he was not so well able to endure travel and pains as formerly; that his constitution of body required some ease and relaxation; and that he had of late time declined the study of the law, and principally applied himself to other studies, now more easy, grateful, and seasonable for him.' He alludes also to two 'infirmities, which make him unfit for that employment, first, an aversion to the pomp and grandeur necessarily incident to it; and secondly, too much pity, clemency, and tenderness in cases of life, which might prove an unserviceable temper.'

'But if,' he concludes, 'after all this, there must be a necessity of undertaking an employment, I desire that it may be in such a court and way as may be most suitable to my course of studies and education, and that it may be the lowest place that may be, to avoid envy. One of his Majesty's counsel in ordinary, or at most, the place of a puisne judge in the Common Pleas, would suit me best.' His scruples were, however, eventually overcome, and on the 7th November, 1660, he accepted the appointment of Lord Chief Baron."

Of this appointment Bishop Burnet says, "When the Earl of Clarendon (then Lord Chancellor) delivered him his commission, in the Speech he made, according to the custom on such occasions, he expressed his Esteem of him in a very singular manner, telling him, among other things, that if the King could have found out an honester and fitter Man for that Employment, he would not have advanced him to it; and that he had therefore preferred him, because he knew none that deserved it so well. It is ordinary for Persons so promoted to be Knighted, but he desired to avoid that honour done him, and therefore for a considerable time declined all opportunities of waiting on the King, which the Lord Chancellor observing, sent for him upon business one day, when the King was at his House, and told his Majesty there was his modest Chief Baron; upon which, he was unexpectedly Knighted.

He was one of the principal Judges that sat in Cliffords Inn, about settling the difference between Landlord and Tenant, after the dreadful fire of London. He being the first that offered his Service to the City, for accommodating all the differences that might have arisen about the Rebuilding of it, in which he behaved

himself to the satisfaction of all Persons concerned ; so that the sudden and quiet Building of the City, which is justly to be reckoned one of the wonders of the age, is in no small Measure due to the great care which he and Sir Orlando Bridgeman (then Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, afterwards Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England) used, and to the Judgement they shewed in that Affair : Since without the rules then laid down, there might have otherwise followed such an endless train of vexatious Suits, as might have been little less chargeable than the Fire itself had been."

Lord Brougham adds: "An Act of Parliament passed containing directions and



A Sketch of Old Acton, from original of Mr. S. Walker.

arrangements for rebuilding the city. By a clause in this statute, the judges were authorized to sit singly to decide on the amount of compensation due to persons whose premises were taken by the corporation in furtherance of the intended improvements. Sir Matthew Hale applied himself with his usual diligence and patience to the discharge of his laborious and extra-judicial duty. 'He was' says Baxter, 'the great instrument for rebuilding London; for it was he that was the constant judge, who for nothing followed the work, and by his prudence and justice removed a multitude of great impediments.'"

In the year 1671, upon the death of Sir John Kelyng, Chief Justice of the Court of the King's Bench, Sir Matthew Hale was removed from the Exchequer to succeed him. The particular circumstances which caused his elevation to this laborious and responsible situation at a time when his growing infirmities induced him to seek a total retirement from public life, are not recorded by any of his biographers. For four years after he became Chief Justice he regularly attended to the duties of his court, and his name appears in all the reported cases in the Court of King's Bench, until the close of the year 1675. About that time he was attacked by an inflammation of the diaphragm, a painful and languishing disease, from which he constantly predicted he should not recover. It produced so entire a prostration of strength, that he was unable to walk up Westminster Hall to his court without being supported by his servants. "He resolved," says Baxter, "that the place should not be a burden to him, nor he to it," and therefore made an earnest application to the Lord Keeper Finch for his dismissal. This being delayed for some time, and finding himself totally unequal to the toil of business, he at length, in February, 1676, tendered the surrender of his patent personally to the King, who received it graciously and kindly, and promised to continue his pension during his life.

On his retirement from office he occupied at first a house at Acton, which he had taken from Richard Baxter, who says "it was one of the meanest houses he had ever lived in": he adds, "in that house, he lived contentedly, without any pomp, and without costly or troublesome retinue of visitors, but not without charity to the poor; he continueth the study of mathematics and physics still as his great delight. It is not the least of my pleasure that I have lived some years in his more than ordinary love and friendship, and that we are now waiting which shall be first in heaven; whither he saith he is going with full content and acquiescence in the will of a gracious God, and doubts not but we shall shortly live together." Not long before his death he removed from Acton to his own house at Alderley; intending to die there; and, having a few days before gone to the parish churchyard and chosen his grave, he sank under a united attack of asthma and dropsy on Christmas Day, 1676. In writing of this, after quoting a paraphrase by Hale, "not unlikely it was the last he writ," Burnet continues: "Thus he used to sing on the former Christmas days, but now he was to be admitted to hear his part in the new Songs above; so that day which he had spent in so much Spiritual Joy, proved to be indeed the day of his Jubilee and Deliverance; for between two and three in the Afternoon, he breathed out his Righteous and Pious Soul. His end was Peace; he had no strugglings, nor seem'd to be in any pangs in his last Moments. He was interred in the churchyard of Alderley, Among his Ancestors; he did not much approve of Burying in Churches, and used to say the Churches were for the Living, and the Churchyards for the Dead. His Monument was like himself, decent and plain," upon which he himself had ordered a bare and humble inscription to be made.

"No Judge," says Lord Brougham, "has ever been so generally and unobjectionably popular. His address was copious and impressive, but at times slow and embarrassed." Baxter says, "he was a man of no quick utterance, and often hesitant; but spake with great reason"; and Burnet adds: "it will not seem strange that a Judge behaved himself as he did, who at the Entry into his Employment, set such excellent Rules to himself." Amongst these, in his own handwriting, appear the following:—

"Things Necessary to be Continually had in Remembrance.

That in the Administration of Justice, I am intrusted for God, the King and Country; and therefore,



That it be done, 1. Uprightly, 2. Deliberately, 3. Resolutely.  
 That I rest not upon my own understanding or Strength, but implore and rest upon the Direction and Strength of God.  
 That in the Execution of Justice, I carefully lay aside my own Passions, and not give way to them however provoked.  
 That I be Wholly intent upon the Business I am about, remitting all other Cares and Thoughts, as unseasonable, and Interruptions.  
 That I suffer not myself to be prepossessed with any Judgement at all, till the whole Business and both Parties be heard.  
 That I never engage myself in the beginning of any Cause, but reserve myself unprejudiced till the Whole be heard.



Noon hour in old Acton industry, from Original of Mr. S. Walker.

That in Business Capital, [capital offences though my Nature prompt me to Pity : yet to consider, that there is also a Pity due to the Country.  
 That I be not too Ridged in Matters purely Conscientious, where all the harm is Diversity of Judgement.  
 That I be not biassed with Compassion to the Poor, or favour to the rich, in point of Justice.  
 That Popular, or Court Applause, or Distaste, have no Influence into any thing I do in point of Distribution of Justice.

Not to be solicitous what Men will say or think, so long as I keep myself exactly according to the rules of Justice.

To be short and sparing at Meals, that I may be the fitter for business."

"He would never receive private Addresses or Recommendations from the greatest Persons in any matter, in which Justice was concerned. One of the first Peers of England went to his Chamber, and told him, That having a suit in Law to be Tried before him, he was then to acquaint him with it, that he might the better understand it, when it should come to be heard in Court. Upon which the Lord Chief Baron interrupted him, and said He did not deal fairly to come to his Chamber about such Affairs, for he never received any Information of Causes but in open Court, where both Parties were to be heard alike; so he would not suffer

him to go on. Whereupon his Grace (for he was a Duke) went away not a little dissatisfied, and complained of it to the King, as Rudeness that was not to be endured. But his Majesty bid him content himself that he was no worse used, and said, He verily believed he would have used himself no better, if he had gone to sollicite him in any of his own Causes."

Another incident, although an old story, is worth repeating as an illustration of his noble character. It is as follows:—

"A Gentleman who possessed an estate in the eastern part of England, had two sons. The eldest, being of a rambling disposition went abroad. After several years his father died; when the younger son, destroying the father's will, seized upon the estate. He gave out that his elder brother was dead, and bribed false witnesses to attest the truth of it.

In the course of time, the elder brother returned, but came home in destitute circumstances. His younger brother repulsed him with scorn and told him that he was an impostor and a cheat. He asserted that his real brother was dead long ago, and he could bring witnesses to prove it. The poor fellow, having neither money nor friends, was in a sad situation. He went round the parish making complaints, and at last came to a lawyer, who when he had heard the poor man's story replied, 'You have nothing to give me. If I undertake your cause and lose it, it will bring me into disgrace, as all the wealth and evidence are on your brother's side. However, I will undertake your cause on this condition, you shall enter into an obligation to pay me one thousand guineas, if I gain the estate for you. If I lose it, I know the consequences, and I venture with my eyes open.' Accordingly, he entered an action against the younger brother, which was to be tried at the next general assizes at Chelmsford, in Essex.



Sir Matthew Hale, Lord Chief Justice.

The lawyer having engaged in the cause of the young man, and being stimulated by the prospect of a thousand guineas, set his wits to work to contrive the best methods to gain his end. At last, he hit upon this happy thought, that he would consult the first judge of his age, Lord Chief Justice Hale. Accordingly he hastened up to London, and laid open the cause, and all its circumstances. The great judge who was a lover of justice, heard the case attentively, and promised him all the assistance in his power.

The lawyer having taken leave, the Chief Justice contrived matters so as to finish all his business at the King's Bench, before the assizes began at Chelmsford. When within a short distance of the place, he dismissed his man and horses, and sought a solitary house. He found this occupied by a miller. After some conversation and making himself quite agreeable, he proposed to the miller to change clothes with him. As the judge had a very good suit on, the man accepted the offer. Accordingly the judge shifted himself from top to toe, and put on a complete suit of the miller's best. Armed with a miller's hat, and shoes, and stick, he walked to Chelmsford and procured good lodgings, suitable for the assizes that should come on next day. When the trials came on, he walked, like an ignorant country fellow, backwards and forwards along the county hall. He observed narrowly what passed around him; and when the court began to fill he found out the poor fellow who was the plaintiff. As soon as he came into the hall the miller drew up to him. 'Honest friend,' said he, 'how is your cause like to go to-day?' 'Why,' replied the plaintiff, 'my cause is in a very precarious situation, and if I lose it I am ruined for life.' 'Well, honest friend,' replied the miller, 'will you take my advice? I will let you into a secret, which perhaps you do not know; every Englishman has the right and privilege to except against any one jurymen through the whole twelve, now do you insist upon your privilege, without giving a reason why, and if possible, get me chosen in his stead, and I will do you all the service in my power.' Accordingly, when the clerk had called over the names of the jurymen the plaintiff excepted to one of them. The judge on the bench was highly offended with this liberty. 'What do you mean,' said he 'by excepting against that gentleman?' 'I mean, my lord, to assert my privilege as an Englishman without giving a reason why.'

The judge who had been highly bribed, in order to conceal it by a show of candour, and having a confidence in the superiority of his party, said 'Well sir, as you claim your privilege, in one instance, I will grant it. Whom would you wish to have instead of that man excepted?' After a short time, taken in consideration, 'My lord,' says he, 'I wish to have an honest man chosen in,' and looking round the court, 'My lord, there is that miller in the court; we will have him; if you please.' Accordingly the miller was chosen in.

As soon as the clerk of the court had given them all their oaths, a little dexterous fellow came into the apartment, and slipped ten golden guineas into the hands of eleven jurymen, and gave the miller but five. He observed that they were all bribed as well as himself, and said to his next neighbour in a soft whisper, 'How much have you got?' 'Ten pieces,' said he. But he concealed what he had got himself. The cause was opened by the plaintiff's counsel; and all the scraps of evidence they could pick up were adduced in his favour.

The younger brother was provided with a great number of witnesses, and pleaders, all plentifully bribed, as well as the judge. The witnesses deposed, that they were in the self-same country when the brother died and saw him buried. The counsellors pleaded upon this accumulated evidence; and everything went with



a full tide in favour of the younger brother. The judge summed up the evidence with great gravity and deliberation; 'and now, gentlemen of the jury,' said he, 'lay your heads together, and bring in your verdict as you shall deem most just.'

They waited but a few minutes, before they determined in favour of the younger brother. The judge said, 'Gentlemen, are you agreed, and which shall speak for you?' 'We are all agreed, my lord,' replied one; 'our foreman shall speak for us.' 'Hold, my lord,' replied the miller, 'we are not all agreed.' 'Why?' said the judge, in a very surly manner, 'what's the matter with you? what reasons have you for disagreeing?' 'I have several reasons, my lord,' replied the miller, 'the first is, they have given to all these gentlemen of the jury ten broad pieces of gold and to me but five; which, you know is not fair. Besides, I have many objections to make to the false reasonings of the pleaders, and the contradictory evidence of the witnesses.' Upon this, the miller began a discourse which discovered such vast penetration of judgment, such extensive knowledge of law, and was expressed with such energetic and manly eloquence that it astonished the judge and the whole court.

As he was going on with his powerful demonstrations, the judge, in great surprise, stopped him. 'Where did you come from, and who are you?' 'I came from Westminster Hall,' replied the miller, 'my name is Matthew Hale; I am the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench. I have observed the iniquity of your proceedings this day; therefore, come down from a seat which you are nowise worthy to hold. You are one of the corrupt parties in this iniquitous business; I will come up this moment and try the cause all over again.'

Accordingly, Sir Matthew went up, with his miller's dress and hat on, began the trial from its very commencement, and searched every circumstance of truth and falsehood. He evinced the elder brother's title to the estate from the contradictory evidence of the witnesses, and the false reasoning of the pleaders; unravelled all the sophistry to the very bottom, and gained a complete victory in favour of the truth and justice."

Many other incidents in the life of this great Judge might be given, "a Judge equally distinguished for probity and profound learning, whose name, said Lord Eldon, on one occasion, 'ought never to be mentioned in a Court of Justice without reverence.'"

His early biographer writes:—

"He was Naturally a quick Man, yet by much Practice on himself, he subdued that to such a degree, that he would never run suddenly into any Conclusion concerning any Matter of Importance.

He laid aside the tenth penny of all he got for the Poor, and took great care to be well informed of proper Objects for his Charities; And after he was Judge, many of the Perquisites of his Place, as his Dividend of the Rule and Box-Money, were sent by him to the Jayls, to discharge poor Prisoners, who never knew from whose hands their Relief came. It is also a Custom for the Marshal of the King's Bench to present the Judges of that Court with a piece of Plate for a New Year's Gift, that for the Chief Justice being larger than the rest. This he intended to have refused, but the other Judges told him it belonged to his Office, and the refusing it would be a prejudice to his Successors, so he was persuaded to take it; but he sent word to the Marshal, That instead of Plate, he should bring him the value of it in Money: and when he received it, he immediately sent it to the Prisons, for the Relief and Discharge of the Poor there. He usually invited his poor Neighbours to Dine with him, and made them sit at table with himself; And if any of them

were sick, so that they could not come, he would send Meat warm to them from his Table: and he did not only Relieve the Poor in his own Parish, but sent Supplies to the Neighbouring Parishes, as there was occasion for it: and he treated them all with the tenderness and familiarity that became one, who considered they were of the same Nature with himself, and were reduced to no other Necessities but such as he himself might be brought to: But for common Beggars, if any of these came to him, as he was in his Walks, when he lived in the Country, he would ask such as were capable of working, Why they went about so idly? If they answered, It was because they could find no work, he often sent them to some field, to gather all the stones in it, and lay them on a heap, and then would pay them liberally for their pains: This being done, he used to send his Carts, and caused them to be carried to such places of the Highway as needed mending."



*Photo :*

A Quiet Nook at the North of Old Acton.

*Austin.*

Although Sir Matthew Hale lived in great simplicity he had close friendship with not a few eminent men, amongst whom were Dr. Ward Bishop of Salisbury, Dr. Barlow Bishop of Lincoln, Dr. Barrow Master of Trinity College, Dr. Tillotson Dean of Canterbury, Dr. Stillingfleet Dean of St. Paul's. "These," adds Burnet, "are reckoned among Judge Hale's friends—yet there was an intimacy and freedom in his converse with Bishop Wilkins that was singular to him alone; he had, during the late wars, lived in a long and entire friendship with the Apostolical Primate of Ireland, Bishop Usher: Their curious searches into Antiquity, and the sympathy of both their Tempers led them to a great Agreement almost in everything. He held also great conversation with Mr. Baxter, who was his neighbour at Acton, on whom he looked as a Person of great Devotion and Piety, and of a very subtle and quick apprehension; their conversation lay most in

metaphysical and abstracted ideas and schemes." Bishop Burnet concludes his narrative: "Thus lived and dyed Sir Matthew Hale, the Renowned Lord Chief Justice of England: He had one of the blessings of Virtue in the highest measure of any of the Age, that does not always follow it, which was, That he was universally much valued and admired by men of all sides and persuasions. . . . His name is scarce ever mentioned since his death without particular accents of singular respect. . . . Thus were Penegyrics made upon him while yet alive, in that same Court of Justice which he had so worthily governed. As he was honoured while he lived, so he was much lamented when he died: And this will still be acknowledged as a just Inscription for his Memory, though his modesty forbid any such to be put on his Tombstone: That he was one of the greatest patterns this age has afforded, whether in his private deportment as a Christian, or in his publick employments, either at the Bar or on the Bench."

Of other famous men who had association with Acton in the seventeenth century, two especially were destined to exert very widespread and permanent influence. This resulted not only through the greatness of their characters, their strong personalities, and their faithfulness to conscience and to God; but likewise from great principles, which they so effectually embraced as to become their living exemplification.

These two men, whom Carlyle calls "at this period the two most striking men in England," were Oliver Cromwell and George Fox. Of the first it may be said that the most remarkable side of his character has still to be generally discovered to the world: his mighty restraint, so often imposed upon an impassioned army, even in the hour of victory, and the greatness of soul which made him of larger mould and mightier influence than one who loved power for its own sake, or who was a warrior and nothing more.

The deep and penetrating character of George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, so impressed the iron-sided warrior on each occasion of their meeting as to make him greatly desire his company.

Of Cromwell's visit to Acton particulars have already been given. The first visit of George Fox,—a great inspirer of new and life-giving thoughts for his own time and for ours,—seems to have been when he here held his first "appointed" Meeting arranged in the immediate vicinity of London. In 1644, after his stay at the "Mermaid" at Charing Cross, and his interview with Cromwell he writes:—"I appointed a meeting in the fields near Acton."

It may have been upon the very spot where these lines are penned (for here were the Church "fields" of those days), that this strange young man of thirty years stood in silence while the villagers gathered about him at that first meeting in our neighbourhood. We can picture him with his remarkable and penetrating eyes, from the piercing light of which men so often asked to be freed, his finely formed mouth, prominent nose, and that marked personality in which the passion of a great message glowed and burned as with a still white heat, but consumed him not, while he waited under this impressive religious exercise until he felt it right to proceed with speech to the assembled people.

Then he gave forth, as he records, "the word of life, the saving truth," and, as his descriptive words continue, "The Lord's power was eminently manifested and His blessed day exalted over all."

It may be interesting, just for a moment, to glance at the life of this man who lived so closely under the illumination and direction of the Holy Spirit. Born in the year 1624, a period of much change and agitation in this country, he was a

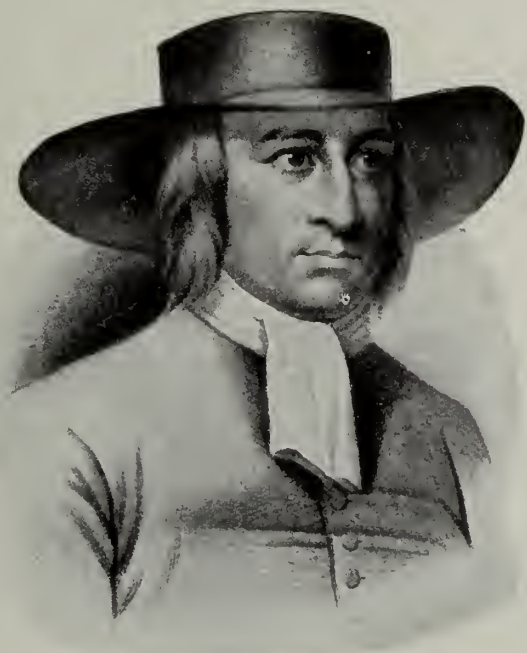






grave child, and when yet a youth began to have spiritual trouble searching after the truth and God. He went to many religious advisers, but they did not give him the help he needed—one told him to sing psalms and smoke tobacco! After prolonged experience and much searching, he says:—"I saw that there were none among them that could speak to my condition, and then, oh then, I heard a voice which said "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition, and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy." Henceforth his life was spent in the ministry of winning souls.

He was, William Penn tells us, "an incessant labourer." Throughout the length and breadth of these islands few places of any importance were left by him unvisited, and to many of them he returned again and again as his spirit felt drawn.



George Fox.

But not in this country only did he carry his message. When he was about forty-eight years of age he paid visits to the Barbadoes, Jamaica, and the Colonies along the eastern shores of North America, and in 1677 he went to Holland and Germany accompanied by William Penn and others.

He had great power in convincing people of sin and leading them to God and helping them to consistency of life. Above all he excelled in prayer. Gradually a large number, to whom his messages appealed, were gathered to him and came into close sympathy with his teaching. These subsequently formed the Society of Friends. For the next century their history is an account of fearful persecutions. Hundreds were imprisoned for their principles, for not swearing, and not conforming to religious observances which they felt to be not in accordance with their



understanding of Holy Scripture. Fox's ministrations received the answering witness from many that his testimony to the truth "was what they had long been waiting for." The result was a wide acceptance, until those holding his simple but robust faith were more numerous than any body of nonconformists in the kingdom.

It was not however in giving to one section of the Christian Church a specific form of worship, or, more strictly, formlessness in worship, that Fox was to have his greatest influence; any more than the mighty work of Luther—the common heritage of Christians everywhere—can be measured by the comparatively small number of those who claim to follow his more specific teaching. Both wrought greater work than they knew; and the mission of Fox and his friends has made progress—if but slowly, yet surely, in the promotion of the deep and abiding spiritual reality of life in Christ wrought out in daily conduct, the effective teaching of brotherhood amongst men making impossible that gigantic negation of fraternity called war, and the bringing in, instead of self assertion, the spirit of self sacrifice and self conquest, the might of gentleness, the fragrance of practical philanthropy, and the truths of vital religion, for all of which Fox laboured and suffered. These have advanced steadily and are now more widely recognized, under all forms of religious life, than ever before. Yet toward the federation of nations and in the sacred cause of peace, the lives both of Fox and Penn still make their call and claim to young and ardent souls in our day, and will continue to do so increasingly.

If any such earnestly turn to the diligent study of the writings of these men their search will be well repaid. Although the age of persecution in which they suffered, and of controversy in which they took prominent part, has given place to more of consideration and tolerance—if not of Christian regard—whatever the special form of belief to which such readers may be attached, the warm brotherhood of Penn and the deep spirituality of Fox cannot but bring helpful inspiration; and doubtless many may feel, as did the celebrated Rev. Charles Spurgeon, that the "Journal" of George Fox is a treasure store full of "nuggets of gold."

The history of Acton during the latter part of the seventeenth century is chiefly a record of the names of distinguished men who chose this village owing to its convenient distance from London, as a retreat from the daily bustle and stir of city life. Thus in 1673 Lord Chief Justice Vaughan lived at Acton. In 1681, Charles Fox gave a house and some grounds for the formation of Parish Almshouses, and it is upon this ground that the Almshouses still existing in the Steyne were built.\* At this time, too, Acton was the residence of William Lloyd, or Floyd, the non-juring Bishop of Norwich, one of the five bishops, who with Archbishop Sancroft, refused to take the oath of allegiance to William and Mary, and was deprived at the Revolution.

In the Acton parish register occur these entries:

"1680—Edward the sonn of the Right Reverend father in God William Loyd Lord Bishop of Peterborough and Ann his wife was baptised 20th of April.

1682—Hannah the dafter daughter] of the Right Honble and Right Reverend father in God William Floyd Lord Bishop of Peterborough and the Lady Ann his wife was baptised 25th of July."

Bishop Lloyd, or Floyd, has frequently been confused with William Lloyd Bishop of St. Asaph, and various accounts have stated that the latter lived in Acton. The writer has found no evidence of this, and the supposition has doubtless arisen through the similarity of names. It may be of interest, however, to recall that this William Lloyd, Bishop of St. Asaph, was one of the seven bishops, who, when James II. ordered the Declaration of Indulgence to be read in all the

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\* These almshouses were pulled down and entirely rebuilt by public subscription, 1886, to commemorate the Jubilee of Queen Victoria.



The Jubilee Almshouses, Acton.

churches of the land, made objection to this exercise of the King's dispensing power. For their boldness the bishops were tried in Westminster Hall, and after a lengthy discussion were acquitted, to the great joy of the people, even the troops at Hounslow giving long and loud cheers for the result.

Bishop Lloyd had previously in company with Bishops Turner of Ely, Lake of Chichester, Ken of Bath and Wells, White of Peterborough, and Trelawny of Bristol, proceeded to Whitehall where he presented the petition to the King and took a leading part in the discussion which ensued. Three weeks later Wm. Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury and the six bishops appeared before the Privy Council to answer the charge of publishing a seditious libel against the King. Refusing to give bail they were committed to the Tower, and on the 15th of June were brought by water to the Court of King's Bench at Westminster, where, pleading not guilty, they were released on their own recognisances. Bishop Lloyd, it is said, was unable to get through Palace Yard by reason of the crowds of people who pressed round him in their enthusiasm and kissed his hands and garments, and



Release of the Seven Bishops, 29th June, 1688, William Lloyd leading.  
From plate after Fresco in House of Commons Corridor, by permission of Messrs. Blackie and Son.

was rescued by Lord Clarendon, who took him home in his carriage by a circuitous way. Their trial on June 29th lasted nine hours. The Lord Chief Justice and one other favoured a conviction, the two other Justices maintaining that they were not guilty of libel. The jury retired to consider their verdict at seven o'clock in the evening, and at ten o'clock the following morning returned one of "Not Guilty"; upon which, as will be seen in the correspondence of the Earl of Clarendon, "there was a most wonderful shout that one would have thought the hall had cracked, insomuch that the Court took notice of it."



The Right Rev. William Lloyd, Bishop of St. Asaph.

According to Bishop Burnet, Lloyd had read the most books, and with the best judgment, made most copious extracts out of them of any in this age; so that Bishop Wilkins used to say "he had the most learning in ready cash of any he ever knew."

About the same time Acton was the home of Sir Charles Scarborough, Physician to King Charles II. On the 18 May 1705 John Evelyn also writes in his diary: "I went to see Sir John Chardine at Turnham Green, the gardens being very fine and well planted with fruit." Sir John Chardine was a learned man, a



great traveller and possessed of large wealth. He was Paymaster to the Forces in the reign of Charles II. Turnham Green was to have been the scene of the execution of the Jacobite plot to assassinate King William III. on the 15 Feb. 1696.

The healthfulness of Acton, which has in recent years attracted many to the district, was evidenced in the distant past by many a long life amongst the inhabitants. In the vestry of the Parish Church there is the picture of a wrinkled old man, who was in his day a living testimony to the bracing wholesome air of our neighbourhood. Under the picture there is a tracing of the old man's burial register:—William Aldridge, wheelwright. Buried November 21st, 1698. Aged 115 years.

And this is only one of several registers which record ages of upwards of one hundred years. The Aldridges were for many years keepers of the parish accounts and clerks of vestry meetings. The signature of one Joseph Aldridge will be seen in the page from the old surveyor's book reproduced in a later portion of this volume.

Although not the oldest of the mansions of old Acton, probably Derwentwater House was that most commonly associated with historic events in the neighbourhood. "On this site," it is said, "stood a house built by Sir Henry Garway in 1638 which was for a time the residence of Skippon, the Parliamentary General. It was subsequently used as a Convent by the ladies of a religious order, who fled from the Continent during the first French Revolution. It was pulled down early in the last century, and in its place was erected the mansion existing until recently and known as Derwentwater House.

From the first house it is probable that the marriage took place on the 5th of April, 1655, of Richard Meredith, Esq., to Mistress Susannah Skippon, as already referred to in connection with the Parish Register. Here too at a much later date the young Earl of Derwentwater is said to have brought his wife and child, and that here she resided at the time of her husband's execution on Tower Hill, 24th February, 1716. Lysons, in 1795, gives this as common report.

It is stated, but with what degree of truth it is impossible to say, that the iron gates east of Newburgh Road have never been used since Derwentwater's death. The old tradition runs that at night the headless body of the unfortunate Earl was borne through them after his execution, the gates being closed and never afterwards opened. They are still pointed out standing in a portion of the old wall just visible in the side passage at the end of Chaucer Road. Within the past few years a house has been erected which obscures them from general view.

In the "Tale of old Acton," Dulcibel Norbury, the granddaughter of the heroine of the story, assists and comforts the Lady Derwentwater in her distress, and with the aid of her cousin, "Major Cunningham," fulfils her promise to the Countess—should the last hope of the Earl's reprieve fail—when all was over, to "lay him in a peaceful grave," in Acton.



William Aldridge.

A Northumbrian countryman in London, but from the Earl's Dilston estate, with the aid of a Bermondsey waggoner, it is said, brings the body to this temporary resting place in a load of hides, in secret under cover of the night.\* Dulcie draws back the bolts, two faithful servants assist to swing the gates, the Major, a Priest, the groom and the Northumbrian peasant take up the body, and the little procession, "Lady Derwentwater walking first alone, Lady Norbury and Dulcibel next and then the two servants," pass to a little dell or hollow, hidden away under o'er hanging foliage; and after a few low whispered rites, Dulcibel places her wreath of snowdrops upon the coffin and the "almost silent burial" is over.

Until quite recently this supposed spot was marked by the nameless obelisk photographed in the dell, but now removed and re-erected in the Acton Park.†

As various accounts of the end of the unfortunate young Earl have been given and many references are constantly made to local traditions of him, it may be of

interest to quote a short sketch of his ancestry.

An old account of the family runs:—"The Derwentwaters have long since gone, and with them the records and traditions of a thousand years, which would still have remained but for the misfortunes and ultimate extinction of this ancient house." Descended from Danish, Saxon or possibly Celtic ancestors, there can be little doubt that the de Derwentwaters were settled in the Vale of Derwentwater in the beautiful Lake district before the Norman Conquest. Here they were allowed to retain their domain in peace from the nature of the country and the difficulty which there would have been in dispossessing them. The family took a leading part in public affairs at a very early date.

Thomas de Derwentwater was a Knight of the Shire for Westmorland in the Parliament of the



Obelisk. photographed in the dell of the Derwentwater Grounds.  
Now erected in Acton Park.

\* NOTE.—It will be noted that this does not agree with the account of the disposal of the body given later.

† On its removal the following inscription was put on the obelisk, but the gun metal plate containing it was soon afterwards stolen:—"This monument was designed as a memorial of James Radcliffe Earl of Derwentwater, one of the leaders of the rebellion of 1715 who was taken prisoner at the battle of Preston, tried in Westminster Hall and beheaded on Tower Hill February 24 1716. It was erected by Lady Derwentwater in the grounds of the mansion in Horn Lane, Acton, formerly General Skippons and afterwards known as Derwentwater House, at which house she was at the time residing."



26th year of Edward the First's reign. During the reign of Richard II. John de Derwentwater was Sheriff for this county and also Member of Parliament. In the reign of Henry V. Nicholas Radcliffe held the office of Sheriff. He married Elizabeth, sole heiress of Sir John de Derwentwater. This was in 1417. "The son and heir of this marriage Thomas built the house and lived upon Lord's Island."



Part of the old Horn Lane, as it appeared a few years ago.

He married the aunt of Queen Katharine Parr, who resided previous to her marriage at Kendal Castle, the home of her ancestors. This Sir Thomas Radcliffe had six sons and eleven daughters; and now occurred a singular family conspiracy to disinherit the eldest son John, the rightful heir, in favour of Sir Richard the second son and favourite of King Richard III.\* This Sir Richard Radcliffe K.G., who fell under the banners of his namesake at Bosworth Field in 1485, was with King Richard's other favourites Sir William Catesby and Lord Lovell, said to be referred to in the couplet written and stuck upon the doors of St. Paul's Cathedral by William Collingbourne, Sergeant of the Pantry:—

"The Ratte, the Cat, and Lovell our Dogge,  
Rule all England under the Hogge."

King Richard, who resided at Penrith Castle at times, had adopted the boar as his badge or armorial cognizance. On the death of old Sir Thomas, the disinherited Sir John Radcliffe immediately entered, and when he died in 1509, his son, by Anne daughter of Henry Fenwick, Esq., Sir John the younger not only held till his death but also devised the estates. This second Sir John's will was made at the Isle of Derwentwater, on February 1st "in the year of God a thousand five hundred and twenty-nyne, and in the XXth year of King Henry the Eighth."

He died the next day and was buried in the parish church of Crosthwaite. The brass plate was incorrectly dated 1527.

"This Sir John of the Isle was perhaps the most notable man of the family. Coming as he did to the estate, as son of the disinherited son of the last of the de Derwentwaters *in the female line*, he nevertheless held a very conspicuous and

\* NOTE.—Sir Thomas suffered a recovery of his manors and estates to his third son Edward, who immediately conveyed them back to his father and Sir Richard the second son for their joint lives; remainders to heirs male of the bodies of 1 Sir Richard, 2 Sir Edward, and the three younger sons in order of age successively. But by a deed of 1530 it appears that, on this transaction taking place in 1480, Richard and Edward second and third sons were sworn that John, the heir, should enjoy the Manor of Derwentwater for life, if he outlived his father and brother Richard. ("The Last of the Derwentwaters": J. Fisher Crosthwaite).



honourable position for many years, and up till his decease. He was several times selected to fill the office of High Sheriff, then an office of great consequence, on account of the constant state of hostility in which this county was placed with Scotland, by the predatory irruptions of that gallant people. He was several times appointed to treat on peace and other matters affecting the safety of the realm, with his restless neighbours; and was the last of his race who held any public post of consequence in his native shire. He led the men of Keswick, Stanmoor, Alston and Gillsland in the Scottish wars, and they contributed by their bravery to the victory at Flodden. He was constantly engaged in the duties of a leader in that wild and perilous border warfare, in which English and Scotch so often met in plundering foray and hostile strife."

From his day the Radcliffes, although occasionally resident on Lords Island, were principally connected with the county of Cumberland by their landed estates, the house on Lords Island being a summer residence which was afterwards deserted. This island had become the residence of the family probably as much for security against invasions of the Scots as for the lovely scenery by which it is surrounded. The mansion was built by Sir Thomas Radcliffe probably about 1450. The island, which is six acres in extent, had famous oak and yew trees. These with those of Crow Park and some other woods, were sold by the Commissioners for Greenwich Hospital in 1749 for £7000, and in all upwards of 14,000 large timber trees were taken down. This wonderful wood is the subject of a letter of Mr. Peter Crosthwaite to the Earl of Newburgh, dated January 24th 1800:—

"The Crow Park which will measure seventeen or eighteen acres did perhaps exceed any other park in the world for fine oak timber. The trees were in general 27 yards high ranked close, and not one very crooked one amongst them, and were many of them 12 feet in girth and not one bough on the greatest part of them until you get 16 yards high, and not even a shrub or any other kind of tree amongst them. . . . A Joseph Banks of 75 years of age, was squaring timber here the other day with his heavy axe. Knowing he was a principal hand at cutting down the timber of Derwentwater Estate, I made much enquiry of him respecting the Island timber, and he says that the yew from which I took the coming piece was the largest of twenty-one which they cut down."

Another sale of timber by the first Earl of Derwentwater in 1687, is signed "Derwentwater," and has the Earl's seal—a Bull's head rising out of a ducal coronet. Gray, the poet, visited this part in 1769, and wrote:—

"I walked to Crow Park, now a rough pasture, once a glade of ancient oaks, whose roots still remain on the ground, but nothing have sprung from them. If a single tree had remained this would have been an unparall'd spot, but not a single one of the ancient Oaks was left upon the estate."

What interest Sir John, who was son of the disinherited eldest son of Sir Thomas, held in the Derwentwater Estates, where from his residence and authority, he was regarded as the rightful owner, having passed from memory, remained a complex puzzle to all except a few enquiring antiquarians. The family conspiracy to set aside his father's rights as eldest son, solves the enigma; but the reason for the proceeding has never been discovered.

Sir John, of the Isle, had no children, and his sister's son, John Radcliffe, became his heir. But now the centre of interest in the family passes to Northumberland, where, at Dilston Hall, they take up their permanent residence.

Sir Edward Radcliffe, uncle of Sir John, married the heiress of Cartington. Dilston, and Whetton Hall in Northumberland and Hawthorn in the County

Durham, and the Derwentwater Estates also descended to him—the only son of his elder brother Richard having died. There follow in succession his son Sir Cuthbert Radcliffe, who died 20th July 1545, leaving George Ratcliffe his eldest son and heir, who was knighted by the Earl of Hertford in Scotland, 23rd September 1546; Sir Frances Radcliffe who followed, was succeeded by Sir Edward, his second but eldest surviving son—a distinguished Loyalist commonly called “Loyal Sir Edward.” His estates were sequestered under the Commonwealth as shown by the proceedings of the Commissioners for Forfeited Estates 27th October, 1652.



Fine Cedar of Lebanon, which stood in the grounds of Derwentwater House, Acton.

His only surviving son and heir, Sir Francis afterwards created Earl of Derwentwater, married the eldest daughter of Sir William Fenwick. He seems to have been an ambitious man, adding the hall or mansion to the ancient castle at Dilston and keeping a domestic establishment, having some thirty-three servants, at wages, it is said, “hardly exceeding in the whole £60 a year, of whom the cook had £10 a year; the gardener the like.” But on the other hand my Lady Radcliffe and her daughter Mary had £200 a year “for clothes.”

According to a minute in Privy Council, dated June 4th 1679, he was in custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms on suspicion of being concerned in the pretended “Plot while attending the High Court of Parliament, from which he was discharged on

giving security in £5000 for his good and peaceable behaviour, and to do nothing prejudicial to the King, and to return to Dilston, and not to move beyond five miles from his house without permission." He wished to revive in his person the Earldom of Sussex, which became extinct in 1641 by the death of his kinsman Sir Edward Radcliffe without issue, and at that time he proposed to marry his eldest son, Edward, to the Lady Charlotte daughter of King Charles II.,—producing in connection with the negotiations a rent roll of £6263, a great revenue at that time. This marriage did not take place. But, still bent upon an alliance with the Royal House of Stuart, this son Edward, married Lady Mary Tudor, the youngest natural daughter of Charles II.—the bride being only in her fourteenth year at the time of the marriage. In the month following this event in 1688 Sir Francis was created Earl of Derwentwater, Baron Tynedale, and Viscount Radcliffe and Langley. "Perhaps there is not," says one of the narrators of this family's history, "to be found in the page of History a more notable instance of the 'vanity of human wishes,' than that of Sir Francis Radcliffe to have his house enobled. This ambition of his led to the ruin and extinction of one of the most ancient families in Britain."

By this marriage there were four children:—James the unfortunate third and last Earl with whose life we are most concerned, Lady Mary Tudor Radcliffe, married 1720 to Wm. Petre Esq., and died leaving no issue surviving, Francis who died in 1715, and Charles, who survived the third Earl for thirty years, and then followed him to the scaffold on a sentence passed in 1716. This marriage to Charles II.'s young daughter was an unhappy one, and after twelve years they entered into a deed of separation; five years thereafter the second Earl died, and she married twice subsequently and survived her third husband and also the dynasty of the Stuarts. Her death took place in Paris November 5th 1726 in the 54th year of her age.

The young James would be about eleven years of age when his parents separated, and he seems to have lived in France most of the time of his minority. There he lived with his kinsman the "Young Pretender," and a friendship was established which lasted as long as they lived. Here too it was that he formed an attachment for the "charming daughter" of Sir John and Lady Webb. This acquaintance begun "in the springtime of their lives, grew with their growth" and ripened into ardent devotion and made the few short years they lived together bright and happy.

Two years before his marriage he came over to England and visited his estates in Northumberland and Cumberland when there were great rejoicings. Tradition says that this was the only visit he paid to Derwentwater. There was no house on Lord's Island then, "the peaceful little lake of Derwentwater" having been the scene of disturbance during Cromwell's time, when Lord's Isle was for the Royalists and St. Herbert's for the Parliamentarians. Sir Gilfred Lawson the then owner (ancestor of the late Sir Wilfred Lawson), had great stores of ammunition for Parliament in St. Herberts. Later it is said that from Lord's Island Mansion was taken much of the material for the former Town Hall of Keswick built in 1695.

The marriage of the young Earl James took place on the 10th of July 1712 to Anna Maria, daughter of Sir John Webb of Dorset, Baronet. Her marriage portion from her father was £12,000, and her husband on his part promised £1000 jointure rent charge to her, "to which £100 a year was to be added on the death of either of her parents, and £300 a year for pin money. His estates were to be



charged with £12,000 for daughter or daughters, or, £20,000 in the event of there being no male issue." This portion eventually came to Lady Petre, the only daughter, she surviving her only brother. Of his marriage the young Earl, who had just completed his 23rd year, wrote three days after to his cousin Lady Swinbourne:—

"I was married to my great content in every respect on Thursday last. My dear wife, her father, and mother charm me more and more every day. I could wish with all my heart you were witness of my happiness, and that I had your opinion upon my choice, which, if approved of by so good a judge, would double my pleasure." And to the same relative, the bride, Lady Derwentwater, wrote when the honey-moon had barely passed:—



Old Iron Gates once an Entrance into Derwentwater Park, Acton, at the end of the present Chaucer Road.

"I have many thanks to return your ladyship for the favour of your letter and obliging congratulations. My Lord Derwentwater's great merit and agreeable temper makes me think I have all the prospect imaginable of being entirely happy."

Under the marriage contract it was provided that for two years "Sir John Webb should find the residence and table for the noble pair," during which time the new house the Earl had resolved to build at Dilston, was in course of erection. They resided for two years at Hatherhope, Gloucestershire, except when

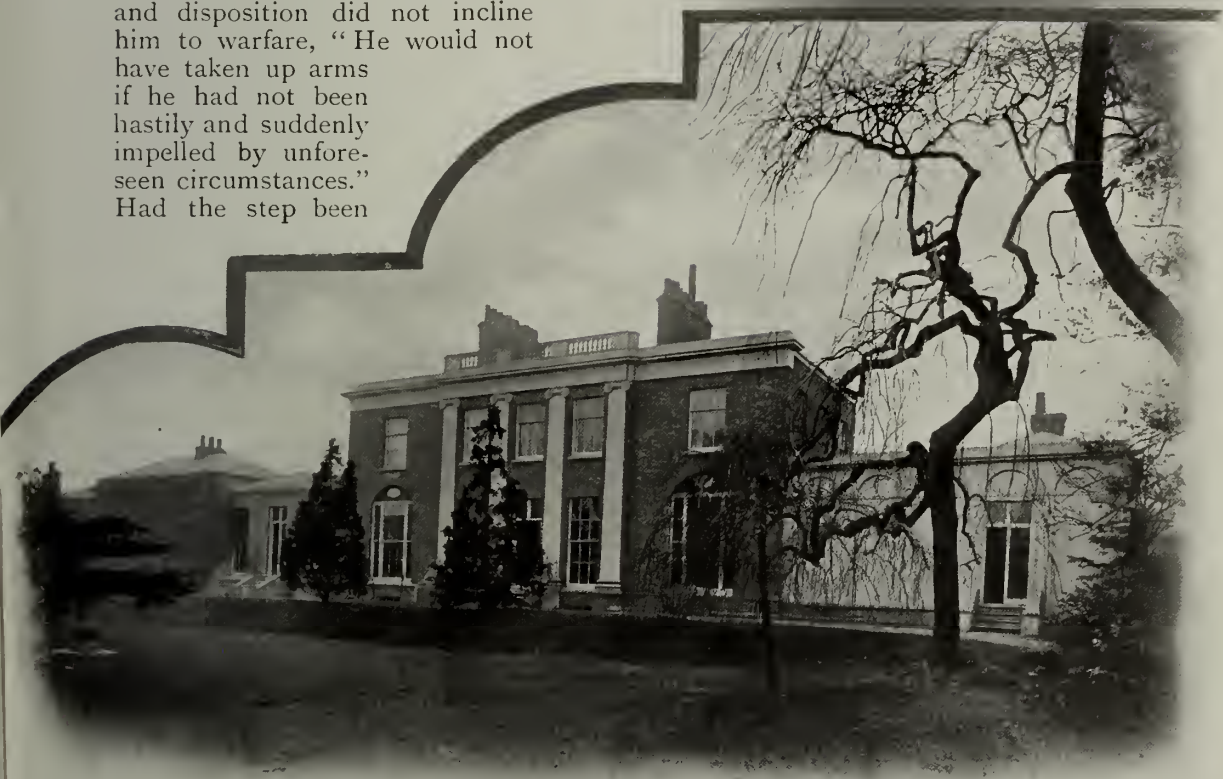
they visited London. On the 7th of February 1714 the Earl again wrote to his cousin:—"Sir John has behaved himself wonderfully well to us, quite through the whole time, really performing everything more than I could have expected," and he continues, "never anybody could be so desirous to go north as my wife is, especially just coming from the diversions of London, except your ladyship or myself who long to be established there." This desire was now soon to be fulfilled, and early in the autumn of that year we read, "the happy pair took up their residence at Dilston, making their tenantry happy by their liberality, surrounded by social enjoyments and the endearments of domestic affection, and dispensing their princely hospitality. This period of the Earl's life seems to have been as happy as ever fell to the lot of man. The brief space of five years elapsed, between the first coming to his ancestral estates and the time of his leaving them, never to return. In this brief period he had gained unbounded esteem and popularity in the nation."

But now was approaching the crisis in the life of this young nobleman, and its result is a sad commentary on a preparation for the great decisions and supreme moments of life, when all previous experience has mainly contributed to the gratification of impulses and desires (even although of a kindly character), rather than to the bracing of heart and mind for the more serious discipline of life's realities.

"Shortly after the death of Queen Anne and the accession of George I., which events occurred in the autumn of 1714, a very extensive design existed for restoring the family of Stuart to the throne. Those who favoured this unhappy cause,—usually termed Jacobites, from James (Jacobus II.), who had forfeited the crown in 1688, were principally old families of rank in the North and West of England, and in Scotland, and other persons who were adverse to those principles of elective monarchy which had raised the family of Hanover to the throne. The Government of George I., becoming alarmed for its safety, took measures to prevent the expected insurrection, seized the horses, arms, and ammunition, which had been gathered together by the Jacobite leaders, and hastened to take various persons into custody."

Among the noblemen and gentlemen who were ordered to be arrested on suspicion were the Earl of Derwentwater and Thomas Foster, Member of Parliament for the County of Northumberland. Warrants were issued for their apprehension, but the design having been communicated by one of the Clerks at the Secretary of State (Stanhope's) Office to his Lordship's friends in London, they gave him warning of the intended arrest. Long before the messenger with the warrant reached Durham, Lord Derwentwater had fled from Dilston and found refuge in the cottage of one Richard Lambert, a humble but faithful retainer of the family. It is said he had previously gone to a magistrate and demanded to know what charges were made against him, but was not informed. While he remained in concealment through the latter part of August the whole of September and the beginning of October, this period was occupied by some of the gentry of the county in planning a concerted rising with the Scots, to maintain the right of the Pretender (James III.) to the throne. The Earl of Mar and other Scottish noblemen had already risen in favour of the exiled Prince late in the month of August 1715 and he had been proclaimed James VIII. of Scotland in Edinburgh. One hundred thousand pounds was sent from France for the enterprise, and Lord Mar was constituted Commander-in-chief. Early in October the Earl of Derwentwater's friends and neighbours were said to be ready to appear

in arms. His religion, his affections and sympathies were all on the side of the House of Stuart. But Lord Derwentwater's character and disposition did not incline him to warfare, "He would not have taken up arms if he had not been hastily and suddenly impelled by unforeseen circumstances." Had the step been



View of the Derwentwater House from the Gardens.



taken deliberately he could have gathered a formidable array, having large possessions, an attached tenantry, and hereditary honours. His stake was a heavy one, as, if the attempt failed, all these, the tenderest ties, and even life itself would be forfeited.

The Earl remained some time in concealment, but "at length, desirous of an interview with his family, he repaired secretly to his own house. A considerate wife on such an occasion would have probably recommended safe and moderate measures to her husband, but the Countess of Derwentwater is said to have been of a temper which made her a bad adviser at this juncture." Tradition says that

on his thus stealthily revisiting Dilston Hall she reproached him with some asperity, declaring "it was not fitting that the Earl of Derwentwater should continue to hide his head in hovels when the gentry were up in arms for their rightful sovereign," and throwing down her fan she exclaimed "Take that, and give your sword to me." These stinging reproaches may have influenced the Earl as to the course he should pursue.\* He resolved to join the insurgents.

It was on the 6th of October, 1715, that the Earl, at the head of a company of gentlemen and his own armed servants, in all numbering about sixty, joined Thomas Foster who was chosen for command of the forces in England.

The rebellion was an utter failure. The small force to which the Earl was joined got as far south as Preston. But how ill advised it was, as well as Foster's incapacity, was soon shown. Although at first greatly elated by the adhesion of men of

Lancashire to the number of 1200, upon hearing of the approach of the royal troops, he was overcome with panic, and instead of taking active steps to meet them, or summoning a council, he betook himself to bed. The bridge across the river and the banks about the town were left undefended, and, with all the advantages of position on his side, after a short resistance Foster secretly sent to propose a capitulation. Derwentwater and his brother Charles behaved themselves with bravery, "The Earl, throwing off his coat and waistcoat, encouraged the men



Old houses in "The Steyne."

\* There is no written evidence of the accuracy of this domestic scene having taken place; and the close and happy union between the Earl and his Countess, as shown in his writings of and to her, contradict the story.

to labour by example, exhortation, and presents of money." In the state paper office it is stated that the Earl and his brother objected to capitulation. When it was decided upon, that it might not prove ineffectual, he voluntarily became hostage for the cessation, to spare further bloodshed in a hopeless cause. The royal troops entered the town in two detachments, and, meeting in the market place, where the whole of the insurgents were drawn up, they disarmed them and formally made them prisoners.

By this final blow, the rebellion in England was effectually terminated. In Scotland the insurgents held out for two months longer, at the end of which period they dispersed. Among the captives taken at Preston were Lords Derwentwater, Widdrington, Nithsdale, Wintoun, Carnwath, Kenmure, Nairn, and Charles Murray. About 500 of the inferior prisoners were sent to Chester Gaol, and many others to London, where they arrived on the 9th December. The prisoners at Preston were treated with cruel rigour. They were confined in churches pending the orders of the Government as to their disposal, and many of them without needful clothing. Winter had set in, with the hardest frosts and the deepest snows which had happened in England for thirty years. The snow was a yard deep on the road when the unhappy prisoners were taken to their several destinations. Many died from their hardships, others from a malignant fever; some were executed, and several Highlanders received the fate they most dreaded—transportation to the American plantations. The prisoners sent up to London were divided among the four principal prisons, the noblemen being secured in the Tower. They were not long suffered to remain in uncertainty regarding their fate. On the day of the opening of Parliament, Mr. Lechmere, in a long vehement speech, descanted upon the guilt of the insurgents, and ended by impeaching James Earl of Derwentwater and the other noblemen of high treason. No opposition was offered, and the impeachment was carried up to the House of Lords on the same day. On the 9th February, 1716, they were brought before the High Commission Court sitting in Westminster Hall for the occasion; the Court being constituted of the Peers, the Lord Chancellor (Cowper) presiding as Lord High Steward, and King George and the Prince of Wales being present. When the Earl of Derwentwater was asked whether he had any cause to show why judgment should not be passed upon him, he spoke as follows:—

"I only humbly beg leave of my noble Peers to repeat a few circumstances mentioned in my answer to the articles of impeachment exhibited against me by the honourable House of Commons. But the terrors of your Lordship's just sentence, which at once deprives me of my life and estate, and completes the misfortunes of my wife and innocent children, are so heavy upon my mind, together with my inexperience, that I am scarce able to allege what may extenuate my offence, if anything can do it. I have confessed myself guilty; but, my lords, that guilt was rashly incurred, without any premeditation, as I hope your lordships will be convinced by one particular. I beg leave to observe, I was wholly unprovided with men, horses, arms, and other necessaries, which, in my situation, I could not have wanted had I been party to any matured design. No, my offence was sudden, and my submission was early; when His Majesty's Generals thought fit to demand hostages for securing the terms of cessation, I voluntarily offered myself, without which the cessation might possibly have proved ineffectual; and whilst I continued hostage, the great character of His Majesty's clemency, and the repeated encouragement I had to hope for mercy by surrendering to it, soon determined me, and I accordingly declared my resolution to remain with His Majesty's forces: and

from that time submitted myself to his goodness, on which I still entirely depend.

I humbly hope to obtain the mediation of your lordships, and of the honourable House of Commons, in my behalf, solemnly protesting my future conduct shall not show me altogether unworthy of your generous compassion for my life, which is all I beg of His Majesty."

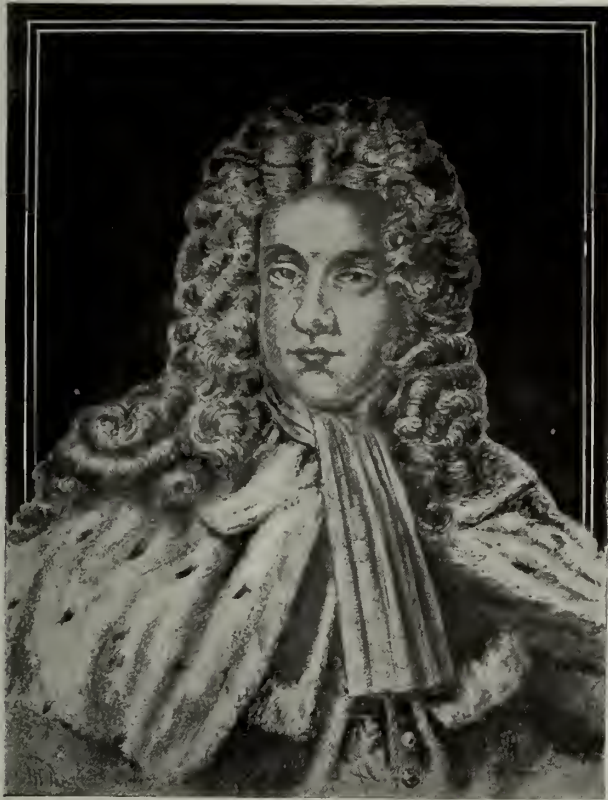
"This touching appeal," writes J. F. Crosthwaite, "thrilled through many hearts, and the lapse of time does not lessen our sympathy for the young and amiable nobleman, deprived of all he held most dear, for his generous but imprudent enterprise, in behalf of the Prince whom he loved, and believed to be his rightful sovereign. Having previously pleaded guilty and now thrown himself on the mercy of the Crown, the Earl had nothing to urge in arrest of judgment; and accordingly, the other formalities having been gone through, the High Steward (Lord Chancellor Cowper) pronounced the usual sentence, during the delivery of which the Axe was turned with its edge ominously towards the noble prisoners arraigned at the Bar. The sentence was prefaced by a long lecture on the sin of rebellion, and the blessings the country enjoyed by the advent of King George. A part of the address betrayed the spirit of the age of penal statutes; for his lordship said, 'If I could have the least hopes that the prejudices of habit and education would not be too strong for the most earnest and charitable entreaties, I would beg you not to rely any longer on those directors of your consciences, by whose advice you have very probably been led into this miserable condition; but that your lordships would be assisted by some of those pious and learned divines of the Church of England, who have constantly borne that infallible mark of sincere Christians—Universal Charity.'

What would be thought in the present day of a judge in passing sentence of death on a Roman Catholic, if he should advise him to renounce the religion and the spiritual aid in which he had been taught to trust!"

The young Earl was attainted and condemned to suffer death as a traitor, according to ancient barbarous form. But his sentence was afterwards mitigated and orders were issued that he should be merely beheaded and his body given up to his friends. The greatest efforts were made to procure his pardon. Intercession was made with the Court and both Houses of Parliament in his behalf. The Countess had lost no time in proceeding to the Earl. The title deeds and other valuable papers were hastily packed in a box and removed for safety to a cottage in Upper Dilston, where they remained until taken to the mansion of Capheaton for better concealment. Her journey may have been similar to that of Lady Nithsdale, who rode from Scotland to Newcastle, and then took the coach to York, when the depth of the snow obliged her to go on by horse to London, the snow being generally above the horse's girths. Accompanied by the Duchess of Cleveland and Bolton, the Duchess of Richmond, and other ladies, the Countess of Derwentwater was, by the Dukes of Richmond and St. Albans, introduced into the King's bedchamber, where in French she humbly implored his clemency for her unfortunate husband. The King, however, adhered to his purpose, and she went on February 21st with the ladies of the other condemned noblemen into the lobby of the House of Lords to beg their intercession, but here also her petition was disregarded. Appeals were made to the cupidity as well as to the compassion of His Majesty's ministers, and Sir Robert Walpole declared in the House of Commons that £60,000 had been offered to him if he would obtain the pardon of the Earl. "But," to quote from Crosthwaite, "legitimate influences were not wanting. The Duchesses of Cleveland, Bolton and Buccleuch, and other ladies



of the first rank, went with the Countess of Derwentwater to St. James's Palace on Sunday, 19th February, in order that, as the King was returning from Chapel the Countess kneeling before him might implore mercy for her husband. In the annals of the second year of King George's reign we read: 'The Lady Derwentwater being introduced into the King's chamber, applied very handsomely and in so moving a manner to the King that His Majesty seemed inclined to show the Earl some mercy; and had he not shown himself unwilling to give satisfaction in some points (viz, by adopting the Church of England and acknowledging the title



James, Third and Last Earl of Derwentwater.

of George I.), which there was just reason to expect from him, it was believed he would have found the effects of the King's clemency.'

But the prayer of these noble ladies was heard with aversion by King George. The Earl's relationship to the exiled House of Stuart was of itself an offence, which he who sat in the Stuart's Throne could never forgive. The Peers who on the following Wednesday ventured to advocate mercy to the Earl, incurred King George's marked displeasure; and on the 23rd, when the House of Lords had humanely interfered on their behalf, he showed his resentment and implacable disposition by ordering the speedy execution of the Earl of Derwentwater and his two companions Lord Nithsdale and Lord Kenmure. On Monday the 20th of

February, two Noblemen came to Lord Derwentwater in the Tower, and in the name of the King offered him his life if he would acknowledge the Hanoverian title, and conform to the Protestant Religion. The Earl without hesitation refused those terms, and declared that he would sooner part with his life than part with his faith. The Government were apprehensive of the consequence of carrying into effect the fatal sentence."

The Countess of Derwentwater accompanied by from twenty to thirty ladies of high rank went to the House of Lords to entreat their intercession for the captives. Early on the morning of the following day, the 23rd, she and Lady Nithsdale with a still larger number of ladies of rank again went to the palace, but were refused audience of the King; who on the same day ordered the execution of the Lords Derwentwater, Nithsdale, and Kenmure.

The ministry determined to comply so far with the wish and feeling of the House of Lords as to respite the Earl of Carnwath and Lord Widdrington but to prevent any further interference. Lord Nairn's life was saved by Lord Stanhope who had been a school-fellow of his at Eton. He threatened to resign if Lord Nairn's life was not spared, and so he prevailed with the ministry.

The Countess of Nithsdale and Lady Nairn concealed themselves behind a window curtain in an ante-room of the Palace, and waiting until the King passed through, suddenly came forward and threw themselves at his feet, but were rudely repulsed. Lady Nithsdale ascertaining that the King would show clemency to some of the condemned lords, but that her husband would certainly not be of the number, set her wits to work to release her husband, and, with consummate skill and devotion, she effected his escape in female attire on the night of the 23rd. When the news of Lord Nithsdale's escape was brought to King George he flew into a great passion, and said he was betrayed, for there must have been some confederacy; and he instantly despatched two trusty persons to the Tower to see that the other prisoners were well secured. The King, however, afterwards observed that "Lord Nithsdale had done the best thing that a man in his situation could do."

The House of Lords over-ruled Sir Robert Walpole and the ministry, and carried an address to the King "for a reprieve to such of the condemned lords as should deserve his mercy," by a majority of five.

The Ministers alarmed at their defeat, met in Council and dictated the King's answer as follows:—"That on this and all other occasions he would do what he thought most consistent with the dignity of the Crown and the safety of the people."

The two remaining peers, the English Lord Derwentwater and the Scottish Lord Kenmure, at an early hour on the morning of 24th February, were brought to the scaffold.

"Three times his life was offered to Lord Derwentwater" says Crosthwaite, "but he would rather die than violate his conscience. Englishmen always have and always will differ in opinion upon many points in religion and politics; but all must be unanimous in applauding that sterling uprightness of principle which will suffer death rather than apostacy or dishonour."

The Northumbrian peasantry believed that miraculous appearances marked the day on which he was beheaded. The aurora borealis appeared specially bright on the night of the fatal 24th February, 1716; and the phenomenon is still known, locally, as "Lord Derwentwater's Lights." Says Gibson in "Dilston Hall," published in 1850:—

"The name of James Radcliffe, Earl of Derwentwater, lives in popular affection; and perhaps in English History there is hardly an episode which has even now a firmer hold on popular sympathies (especially in the north of England)

than his melancholy fate." In the same work are the following lines familiar still to north countrymen :—

"LORD DERWENTWATER'S  
FAREWELL.

Farewell to pleasant Dilston Hall,  
My father's ancient seat ;  
A stranger now must call thee his,  
Which makes my heart to greet.  
Farewell each kindly well-known face  
My heart has held so dear ;  
My tenants now must leave their lands,  
Or hold their lives in fear.  
No more along the banks of Tyne  
I'll rove in autumn gray ;  
No more I'll hear at early dawn  
The lav' rocks wake the day.  
And who shall deck the hawthorn bower,  
Where my fond childhood strayed ?  
And who, when spring shall bid it flower,  
Shall sit beneath the shade ?  
With me, the RADCLIFF'S name must end,  
And seek the silent tomb ;  
And many a kinsman, many a friend  
With me must meet their doom,  
But when the head that wears the Crown  
Shall be laid low like mine,  
Some honest hearts may then lament  
For RADCLIFF'S fallen line.  
Farewell, farewell my lady dear ;  
Ill, ill thou counselled'st me :  
I never more may see the babe  
That smiles upon thy knee  
And fare thee well, brave Widdrington,  
And brother ever true :  
Dear Nithdale, Shafto, Errington,  
Receive my last adieu !

And fare thee well, my own grey steed,  
That carried me aye so free ;  
I wish I had been asleep indeed  
Last time I mounted thee !  
The warning bell now bids me cease,  
My trouble's nearly o'er ;  
Yon sun that rises o'er the tide,  
Shall rise on me no more.

And Gibson adds:—"The popular notion that the Earl was driven into his fatal enterprise by the persuasions of his lady is evidently here referred to, but in the character of that devoted and affectionate wife, and in the other circumstances already mentioned, the reader, it is hoped will find sufficient refutation of the popular opinion, which does so much injustice to her memory. The author of the verses is unknown."

The youthful Earl's last request in the Tower was that his body might be interred with his ancestors at Dilston. This was refused, the government fearing another rising in the north. There have been various accounts of the disposal of his body. One has been given already ; another states that it was buried by his servants in St. Giles-in-the-Fields, and subsequently taken to the family vault at Dilston, and a further account is as follows:—

"From the scaffold the body wrapped in black cloth was conveyed in a hired coach to the Tower, where it would have been buried if the Earl's friends had not contrived to obtain possession of his remains by leave or stratagem. The head was received in a red velvet cloth by a trusty attendant, and borne away by the friends



The old Summer House, Derwentwater Park,  
formerly beside an artificial lake, Acton.

And although here, in London Tower,  
It is my fate to die ;  
Oh carry me to Northumberland,  
In my father's grave to lie.  
And chant my solemn requiem  
In Hexham's holy towers ;  
And let six maids of fair Tynedale  
Scatter my grave with flowers !"



of the Earl. The following morning by 3 o'clock the body was conveyed from the Tower in a hearse to the surgery of Mr. Metcalf, where the head and body were embalmed, and thence to the house of one King an undertaker.

The coffin bore a gilt plate thus inscribed—

'The Right Hon. James late Earl of Derwentwater,  
Died February 24, 1715-6, aged 27 years.'

The remains were taken from London to Dagenham Park, near Romford, a house which was rented by the Countess for a time both before and after his death. They rested some days in a private chapel of that house, and his friends contrived to carry out his wish. The carriage carrying the remains was driven by a servant named Dun, travelling by night and resting by day, to escape observation. It is said that the Duke of Argyle returning from Scotland, victorious over the Stuart cause, met the funeral procession, whereupon he stopped his retinue: and uncovering, manifested tokens of profound sorrow for Lord Derwentwater's untimely end."

It is certain that the body was taken to Northumberland, and the remains deposited in the family vault at Dilston; for yet another account by John Sykes, 1833, says:—

"Either a sham burial took place (at St. Giles, Holborn) or the corpse was afterwards removed for it was certainly carried secretly by friends into Northumberland and deposited with the remains of his father in the chapel at Dilston. In consequence of much conjecture having arisen with respect to the Earl's body being at Dilston, search was made a few years ago (prior to 1833) and the coffin broken open when the body was found after a lapse of a century in a complete state of preservation. It was easily recognised by the suture round the neck, by the appearance of youth and by the regularity of the features. The teeth were all perfect, but several of them were drawn by a blacksmith and sold for half a crown a piece: at the same time portions of the coffin were taken away by the curious. In consequence of these ravages the vault was soon after closed up."

On October 9th, 1874, the bodies of the first three Earls were re-interred at Thorndon in Essex, in the family vault of Lord Petre as the representative of the Derwentwater family.

Lord Derwentwater, who was in his 28th year, left two children, a son and daughter. The latter, born in 1716, after her father's death, married in 1732 Lord Petre. The son John Radcliffe died in France, at the age of 19, in consequence, it is said, of his horse having taken fright and dashing through a doorway with him, by which he was so much injured as to cause his death. This took place on the 31st December, 1731.

"On the 10th June 1716," says Gibson, "The Countess was living in Kensington Gravel Pits, near London, for Bishop Gifford addressed a letter to her there, but she soon afterwards went to Hatherhope, and subsequently made a brief sojourn under her parents' roof at Canford Manor." Lady Derwentwater only survived her husband a few years, and died of small-pox at the age of thirty in a convent at Brussels in 1723. She was buried in the Church of the English Canonesses at Louvain.

For long in the north country popular belief held that her disembodied spirit came to visit the deserted ruins of Dilston Hall:—

"Through those haunted shades the form of Lady Derwentwater has been declared to glide in the moonbeams; and wondering rustics are said to have beheld the rays of her cresset gleaming from the ruined tower as they were wont to shine when in life she was watching there for her lord's return." And the superstitious of the locality

"Seemed to hear at evening hour  
The lady sighing in that roofless tower;

Followed her form, revisiting the gloom,  
And gliding pensive to the moulder'd tomb."

The magnificent estates of the Derwentwater family were confiscated by Government after the execution of the Earl in 1716.

These Estates were held by Trustees until 1735, when they were conferred upon the Royal Hospital for Seamen at Greenwich.

Charles Radcliffe, brother of the third Earl, on the death of his nephew John Radcliffe, referred to above, assumed the title of the Earl of Derwentwater which of course had become extinct under the attainder of the third Earl, and was not revived. He had been taken prisoner with his brother at Preston on 13th November 1715, and found guilty of high treason; but with thirteen fellow prisoners had broken out of Newgate on 11th December 1716 and fled to France, where he became secretary to Prince Charles Edward. He married Charlotte



Derwentwater House from Horn Lane, now removed.

Maria, grand-daughter of the first Earl of Newburgh, a young widow to whom, it is said Derwentwater proposed sixteen times, being at last successful. "Having tried many expedients in vain he adopted the novel one of coming down the chimney, when the Countess, half alarmed and partly pleased with his perseverance, received her daring suitor graciously."

After seeking pardon for thirty years he was captured on board a French vessel bound for Montrose with arms and warlike stores, evidently for the Chevalier in the second rebellion. His eldest son was with him, being then twenty-two years of age. The son was allowed to return to France on the ground that he was a French subject; but Charles, after lying in the Tower for nearly twelve months, was beheaded on Tower Hill, December 3rd, 1746. "A grandson of Charles Radcliffe,"

says Crosthwaite, "was the last of the heirs male of the Derwentwater family, and in his person the family included in the settlement of 1712 became extinct. He was really the last of the Derwentwaters." The royal house whose cause they espoused had a similar fate. In the churchyard at Dunkeld in Scotland stands a polished granite headstone bearing the following inscription:—

'Sacred to the memory of  
General  
Edward Charles Stuart  
Count Roehenstart  
who died at Dunkeld  
on the 28th October 1854  
Aged 73 years.  
Sic transit Gloria Mundi.'

This it is said is the last resting place of the last of the Stuarts.

The story of the Derwentwater family has been a chequered and melancholy one, and a pervading sense of its misfortunes has seemed to attach to the house in Acton, which until recently stood in our midst.

A few years since, the site of the artificial lake, the decayed summer houses, the noble cedar and the ancient sundial, the raised gardens once apparently well cultivated and bounded with fruit trees surrounding the great park, the solitude of the spacious paddocks with here and there stately elms and walnut trees, all shut in by huge walls gave an overpowering sense of its historic past; but even these remnants have vanished and a modern suburb stands in their stead. Before passing from it one further reference may be made; in the basement of this house there stood an interesting old leaden tank for the supply of water, the date upon which is 1675.

The author of "The Tale of Old Acton" makes the Lady Norbury introduce the young Earl and Countess Derwentwater to this mansion:—

"That house is now to be sold," said Lady Norbury, "and it is a good one, but I am not fond of it. General Skippon lived there when I was young. It and some fields at East Acton which he rented are still called by his name. As to the house, though I have often been in it since his day, I am afraid old prejudices still cling to its walls."

Lord Derwentwater laughed gaily. "Then, let us break the spell, dear madam," he said. "Pray be our guide over this house of sombre memories," and he offered her his arm."

They went over it, up and down from garret to cellar, until they stood before this cistern.

"Look here, Jamie," cried the young wife gaily, "Of course we must take possession! The house is ours already. See!" she added, pointing to the letters J.R., surmounted by a D, the letters standing midway between the figures sixteen and seventy-five.

D

16 J.R. 75.

"What does D mean if not Derwentwater? and J.R. is surely James Radcliffe. This cistern is yours, Jamie, if nothing else is."



Human Skull found beneath the roots of a tree, Derwentwater House.



‘I am afraid it will not hold water,’ said her husband: ‘1675 is quite against us.’ . . . ‘but,’ he added, ‘I like the house well, and have no objection to my initials standing there to bid us claim it. Let us now go into the grounds.’”

Derwentwater House was last in private occupation by Alexander Hubbard Esq., J.P., a director of the Great Western Railway; but it was afterwards for some years occupied by the Liberal and Radical Club. The frontage, portico and walls were recently taken down for street widening, necessitated by the new tramway line along Horn Lane; and since, the mansion itself has become a thing of the past. The work of its final demolition took place in November 1909 under the direction of Mr. Kerven of Derwentwater Road. During this operation a human skull and parts of a skeleton were found beneath a tree of considerable size, and it is conjectured that the remains must have been buried about one hundred years. Underneath the building two deep wells were discovered. No clue as to the identity of the skull and human bones has been forthcoming. Mr. Henry Mitchel, one of the best informed of our townsmen on the subject of Old Acton on December 3rd 1909 contributed to the *Acton and Chiswick Gazette*, an article in which he writes:—

“The Derwentwater House and grounds, Acton, have much of interest attached to them. It is supposed that the house just demolished was built upon the site of a former building occupied for a short time by the Countess of Derwentwater. Nicholas Selby Esq., built the new house in 1804, but he resided at Acton House adjoining, at the corner of Churchfield Road; his widow also lived there



Ancient Lead Cistern, formerly in the Derwentwater House.

after his death, Derwentwater House being let to a Mr. Kelly. The garden next King Street was owned by Mr. Selby; the old buildings adjoining were also his property or rented by him. Both Mr. Selby and Mr. Kelly and their families were Roman Catholics, and maintained a priest as their joint domestic chaplain. When they resided in Acton during a part of the year, a large room in the basement of Acton House was fitted as a chapel, and used for services, and when the house was let furnished in the summer months, these took place in a fitted-up chapel in the old wooden building now being taken down in King Street, the chaplain (a Mr. Eppenstale) residing in the cottage adjoining, which was then one, and not two as of late. The congregation consisted of the two families before mentioned, and the

servants (one old servant, it may be interesting to mention, was a descendant of the Penderells of Boscobel, who hid King Charles the Second when escaping from his enemies, and she enjoyed the pension awarded to her ancestors at the Restoration); the rest of the congregation was made up of Irish people from Turnham Green, employed in the many market gardens, there being no Roman Catholic Chapel there at that time, nor any other Roman Catholics at Acton, I believe. Some years when the families were in residence they worshipped in the King Street Chapel, and then the Selbys had access by a private door, and walked from Acton House by the subterranean passage under the Horn Lane Road; the altar was removed from the one place to the other by the same route.

When the Reform Bill was passed in the year 1832, Mr. Kelly gave a dinner *ad lib* of roast beef and plum puddings to as many as liked to be present in the



"The Steyne," opposite Derwentwater House.

field adjoining Derwentwater House; after the dinner he was chaired round the village of the Steyne and High Street, and a great bonfire was lighted to end the day's proceedings.

When the Kelly and Selby families left Acton altogether, Sir Archer Croft, Baronet, took up his residence at Derwentwater House.

With regard to the iron gates (still existing) at the eastern boundary, one legend was that they had never been opened since the earl was taken through them to the tower; this certainly was not correct, as history tells that the route was along the northern road of Edgware. The other and more probable legend, as related by Miss Shipley in her book on Old Acton, tells that the earl was stealthily conveyed from the Tower to Acton, and into the grounds by these iron gates in the

Lammas, Churchfields, and his body deposited for a brief period in the shrubbery of Derwentwater estate, until it was safe to remove it to the final resting place at Dilston Towers. The obelisk now in Acton Park marked the temporary grave.

With reference to the skull now found, I suppose it is extremely difficult to say to whom it belonged, or how long it has lain in the ground."

To a representative of one branch of this ancient family—A. Radcliffe Esq., recently removed from England to the great apple growing valley of Nova Scotia—the writer is indebted for particulars kindly given for these pages. Beside the high eastern wall of the Derwentwater grounds, where stood the former sexagon summer house on the top of a raised mound overlooking the artificial lake, the Central



The former Beldham Mansion.

School has an open air summer shelter with roof upon stout supports, surmounted by the original stone ball, weighing seventy-five pounds, which crowned the old summer house; the whole affording space for occasional classes to be held in the open air. Adjoining is the Newburgh Road. The son of Charles Radcliffe, the earl's brother, became 4th Earl of Newburgh. It is thus highly probable that this road derived its name from the connection of the Newburghs with the Derwentwaters.

The "Steyne" (stone), doubtless bearing its name from Roman days, as indicated by Mr. Montagu Sharpe in his interesting "Antiquities of Middlesex," nestles in a sheltered hollow, and was formerly beside the open stream that flowed



across the highway and on past the Priory eastward until it reached the Stamford brook, shown on all old maps. This cluster of houses stood directly in front of the gates of Derwentwater House, and doubtless at one time afforded lodging for some of the retainers of the great house.

Another of the mansions in this neighbourhood having extensive grounds was that formerly occupied by Mr. Scott Turner, and afterwards by the Beldam family—one of whom was the well known cricketer. The fine old trees of the grounds were long admired by visitors to this part of the town. The site of this house was beside the western entrance to Highland Avenue. It has been taken down, and most of the trees removed to form the avenue just named. But little now remains of the Derwentwater or adjacent mansions save a few high thick walls and the names given to some of the modern roads.

Eastward from the market place on the High Street might have been seen, a few years ago, one of the old houses having an upper window extending over the street. In this house, when the outer wall paperings were removed, were found some of the old coaching hand bills or time tables, an interesting link with the period when the great coaching route through Uxbridge and Beaconsfield passed beneath this window. The house was used last as a barber's shop, and this projecting portion long remained a picturesque reminder of Old Acton. Nearly opposite, on the left, where the old High Street narrowed, another interesting house is seen. This is Suffolk House, now the residence of Mr. W. J. Amherst. This famous old house with its panelled walls, stands like a relic of the seclusion of Acton's former days. It has long been popularly associated with the name of the celebrated David Garrick, but the writer has not been able to trace that he ever lived there. It is possible that his wife, who survived him for forty-three years, may have done so. She was the devoted Eva Marie Violetti, who had been a dancer at the Haymarket, and became the guest of the Earl and Countess of Burlington. They are said to have settled on her £6000 at time of her marriage. Thirty years of Garrick's eventful life she was ever by his side. In his *Life*, by Tom Davies, it is stated that Mrs. Garrick "from the day of her marriage till the death of her husband had never been separated from him for twenty-four hours." Suffolk House appears to have been in the possession of Thomas Manderville, apothecary, in the year 1736, and was afterwards owned by Nathan Carrington, of Jermyn Street, who, 27th June 1771, devised unto his grandson, Nathan Garrick, a nephew of the great actor, "lands and buildings at Acton." As this was some years before the death of David Garrick, he may have been a visitor, if not a resident, at this old Acton house. When he died (20th January, 1779), and was buried in Westminster Abbey at the foot of Shakespeare's statue, with the Duke of Devonshire and Lords Camden, Ossory, Spencer, and Palmerston for his pall-bearers, while Sir Watkins Wynne, Burke, Johnson, Fox, and many men of letters were among the mourners, it is said the funeral procession extended from the Strand to the Abbey. Long years afterwards, in 1822, Garrick's wife, then ninety-eight years of age, was placed beside him.

His power as an actor was very great, and he was often the subject of both envy and criticism. On one occasion the celebrated actress, Mrs. Clive, "standing in one of her tiffs at the wings in Drury Lane, turned away in anger at finding herself moved in her own despite, and said, '— him, he could act a gridiron.'

Shireff, the miniature-painter, who was deaf and dumb, followed closely Garrick's performances, and said he understood him, 'his face was a language.'

It appears from the probate of the will of Nathan Garrick, 1788, that Suffolk

House was left in trust for his infant son, Nathan Egerton Garrick. This son, on the 18th of March, 1808, married Emma Maria Blunt at Petersham Church, Surrey, and their eldest son, Nathan David Garrick, was born 22nd June, 1809, at Thames Ditton, Surrey. In his will, made in 1867, he is described as of "Lichfield House, Acton," the residence which immediately adjoined Suffolk House, and was long in the possession of the Garrick family. Litchfield House was some years ago converted into business premises. This last named will, of which Mr. W. J. Amherst was a trustee, makes the following bequests:—"I give and bequeath unto my dear wife Wilhilmina Caroline Garrick the portrait of my Great Great Uncle David



Old High Street, Acton, showing "Suffolk House" on the left.

Garrick, Esquire, now in my possession painted by Zoffany and also my gold snuff box formerly belonging to the said David Garrick, having been presented to him at Parma by the Duke of Parma." The following further account of this presentation is given in Peake's *Memoirs of the Colman Family*, friends of Garrick, under May, 1764:—"Garrick's visit to Italy was this year rendered doubly interesting to him, by the presence of the King's brother, Edward Duke of York, who was then visiting the Italian States, and was as the Earl of Ulster received by them amid

spectacles of extraordinary magnificence and splendour. The Duke's fondness for music and Theatric pomp was indulged by a display of all that continental cities could proffer. Garrick followed his movements, and participated in these pleasures; personally known to the Duke, he was at the same time the associate of Earl Spencer and Lord Palmerston, and other distinguished English Nobles there, and his own eminence as the English Roscius, led to his invitation to almost every entertainment which was instigated by the Duke's presence. . . .

In a letter to Colman dated from Venice, Garrick says, 'I called at Parma on my way hither, and was introduced to the Duke when he dined with the Duke of York; he speaks English well, and understands it better. He has read Shakspeare and was very desirous to hear our manner of speaking, which desire he showed with so much feeling and delicacy, that I readily consented, in the presence of the Duke of York, Lord Spencer, and the first Minister. He was greatly pleased, and the next morning sent me a very handsome gold Box, with some of the finest enamelled paintings upon all sides of it, I ever saw. He likewise ordered



Old High Street, Acton, showing on the right the grounds of the Garrick House.

apartments for me, and sent me from his court, more conceited by half, than I came to it.'” This account is copied on an old faded sheet of note paper, evidently in the handwriting of Nathan David Garrick and bearing his signature. He continues as follows:—

“The snuff box here referred to, the gorgeous snuff box described in a recent memoir of my ancestor David Garrick, has six compartments of paintings from or I believe by Teniers himself, enamelled upon Gold. This Gem, alike perfect as work of art, and famed for its jewelled excellence was bequeathed to my lamented Father Nathan Egerton Garrick by the Relict of David Garrick at her Decease in 1822, and my Father bequeathed it to myself at his death in 1843. He had previously shown it to the Duke of Sussex who said he had not its equal.

“NATHAN DAVID GARRICK.”

Another old paper, which appears to be a draft for an obituary notice of Nathan David Garrick, describes him as:—





[Photo]

[Austen.]

"Orange Tree Inn," formerly on High Street.

comparatively recent date there existed a luxuriant growth of chestnut trees, once zealously guarded by the widow Garrick. On the other side of the street there was formerly a raised mound in the Priory Grounds, now part of the enclosed space beside the municipal buildings.

There is a record that Robert, the first Lord Carrington, had a lease for a year of Litchfield House; there was also a lease and release of Suffolk House executed by him and the Rev John Disney, D.D. in 1804. Baron Carrington's was, according to Wraxall, the only instance in which George III.'s objections to giving English peerages to those engaged in trade were overcome. On the south of the Parish Church once stood the "Orange Tree Inn" with its quaint dormer windows, nested chimneys, from the old-time

"Eldest Son of Nathan Egerton and Emma Maria Garrick (*née* Vaughan Blunt) and Grandson of Nathan Garrick, both Lieutenants of the Royal Yeoman Body Guard under George III<sup>d</sup>. H.M. Great Nephew of Sir Egerton Leigh, Bart., cousin of Sir Charles William Blunt, Bart., and Great, Great Nephew of the renowned David Garrick of the ancient family De La Garrique, Perigord et Roche-Foucauld and cousin to the Baron Otto von der Malsburg of Hesse, Cassel." Formerly the Garden of Suffolk House extended into the roadway making the latter exceedingly narrow; opposite stood the "Wellington and Shepherd"; an entrance to the village school (St. Mary's infants) is shown on the old maps on the west side of the "Elephant and Castle"; while nearly opposite Berry-mead Gardens was the conduit field; there still stands the old conduit pump in a recess of the brick wall behind a screen of wood. Inside the wall until a



Priory Entrance Doorway.

central fire-places. It is still remembered by the older residents. Near it on the side of the High Street there stood a large tree, which, with seats around its trunk, afforded a resting place in leisurely bygone days. The next historical mansion to be noted is Berrymead Priory. The entrance to it is on the north side, and there still stands the gothic doorway, with its overgrowth of ivy. One of the things most to be regretted in the modern history of Acton has been the loss to the town of the beautiful estate once surrounding this celebrated old mansion. An excellent opportunity for its purchase for the public some years ago was allowed to pass because of a trifling difference in cost, and this delightful relic of our historic past was lost for ever. At that time the grounds were extensive and well wooded. A little to the south-west of the house there was an ornamental lake, which occupied the position now extending along the north side of Avenue Road, between Berrymead Gardens and Winchester Street. A view of the lake, as taken from a very early photograph, may possibly be remembered by some of the oldest inhabitants, but it will no doubt be a surprise to many of those living, even in the immediate neighbourhood, to know that within recollection such a beautiful piece of water existed there. If it had been realised what a great advantage to the town it would have been to have had these beautiful well-wooded grounds for a central park or gardens, directly adjoining the site upon which the Municipal Buildings have now been erected, doubtless the small difference which stood between the old Local Board and the owners would not have been allowed to prevent the purchase being completed. As it is, most of the trees have been removed and much of the property cut up for small houses.



The Lake formerly in the Priory Grounds.

The Priory building itself still remains, and would make an excellent and appropriate museum if it were acquired for that purpose, affording also space for a permanent local exhibition of the annual educational work of our schools, technical classes, industries, etc.

Views of this interesting old spot still make picturesque bits, although they are much shut in by surrounding buildings. A more extended view from the south-east shows some of the trees and grounds which existed about forty years ago. A writer in the "Guild Record," of May, 1894, says: "Not the least interesting, and certainly not the least picturesque, of the historic mansions of Acton, is the Berrymead



Priory. But half-a-dozen years ago it might have been said of it that it lies in the heart of Acton, but so completely is it isolated from 'the maddening crowd,' that once inside its grounds one might be away in some remote shire, surrounded by belts of woodland, for all the suggestion there is that London lies on the other side of its high wall, and that a tramcar, ready to convey you to the verge of the great city beyond, stands outside the gates. There was a charm about a retreat like this which, though in the town, was not of it. Everything is now, alas, changed. The grounds, covering a considerable space and thickly wooded, with a capacious lake towards the southern end, have given place to side streets and workmen's dwellings. The house has been converted into a Conservative Club, while that



Acton Priory from the south-east.

portion of the grounds towards Acton Green has been covered with a huge bakery. Melancholy is the ultimate fate of nearly all old acres."

The early history of the Priory is wrapped in obscurity. Amongst its traditional occupants referred to by the late Mrs. Elizabeth Bourne, who spent thirty-five years of her life there, are three Knights Templar who "dwelt where the Priory now stands in 1100 A.D., two of whom went to the Holy Land. In the year 1200 forty monks of the Benedictine Order bought the estate, built the house with a wing at either end, leaving space for a garden in the front, which was then westward"; and she further states that when building operations were going on around the Priory the workmen "came upon Roman brick foundations," which she saw,



and that anyone might have "made tracings of an immense mansion even outside of the southern wall." The writer has found no other record confirming these particulars, except the discovery of considerable foundations when the adjoining courthouse was built. Probably the first real history is that already alluded to, when Henry VIII. gave the manor to Lord John Russell, from whom, by purchase, it passed to Herbert Earl of Worcester.

J. Norris Brewer, writing in 1816, makes the following reference :—

"There are two manors comprised in this parochial district. The principal of these has appertained to the see of London from a period too remote to be precisely ascertained. The inferior manor formerly belonged to the Chapter of St. Paul's, by which body it was surrendered to the King in 1544. After passing through the families of Russell and Somerset it was purchased by the father of the late Benjamin



Entrance Hall and Gallery, The Priory.

Lethieulliers, Esq., and on the death of the latter gentleman was inherited by Sir Harry Featherstonehaugh, Bart. On the south side of the road near the entrance of the village is the seat of E. F. Akers, Esq., locally termed 'Berrymead Priory.' This was formerly the residence of William Saville, Marquis of Halifax, who died here in the year 1700." This took place the 31st August, and he was buried at St. Albans. Since he left no male issue the Marquisate of Halifax became extinct. It was, however, but a few months before a very similar title was created in another family, when on the 4th of December, 1700, Charles Montagu was made Baron Halifax. More interest, however, attaches to the great Lord Halifax, George Saville, who became the first Marquis, and exercised such vast and varied influence at the time of the revolution. It was shortly after that took place that he settled at Acton. His life was too full to permit of any extended account of his

remarkable career, but a few incidents may be given. The son of Sir William Saville, of Thornhill, who took the side of the loyalists in the Civil War, was but eleven years of age when his father died, and his mother was besieged in Sheffield Castle. It is said that the "besiegers barbarously refused ingress to a midwife of whose services she stood in need," and according to Barwick, "she resolved to perish rather than surrender the castle"—a tenacious spirit, which was



Hall and Staircase, Acton Priory.

perpetuated in her son. Ammunition was short, the walls were decayed, but "it was only a mutiny on the part of the garrison that induced her to yield. Her child was born the day after the capitulation. Under the articles of surrender she was allowed, with her family and goods, to pass in safety to Thornhill. To his mother, who was Anne, daughter of Lord-Keeper Coventry, sister of Lady Shaftesbury and of the learned Lady Dorothy Pakington, George Saville owed his

early education. He married in 1656, as his first wife, Dorothy Spencer, daughter of the first Earl of Sutherland and of his wife Dorothy—the celebrated “Sacharissa” of Waller’s poems. Having settled at Rufford, represented Pontefract in the Convention of 1660, and served under various appointments, he was, in 1668, created Baron Saville of Eland and Viscount Halifax. He now built Halifax House, St. James’s Square, was made a Privy Councillor, and sent as a special envoy to Louis XIV. when the French King had his quarters at Utrecht. About this time he seems to have had some advanced views on the subject of hereditary government, pointing out that “no one would choose a man to drive his carriage because his father was a good coachman.” In 1679 King Charles reluctantly gave him a seat on the Council. Charles was soon captivated, and Halifax became a prime favourite, and, it is said, was “never from the King’s elbow.” Although he had previously seconded an unsuccessful motion to provide against the marriage of future heirs to the throne to Roman Catholics, he was unwilling to join those who wished “to create a reign of terror for Roman Catholics.” In July, 1679, he was created Earl of Halifax. He had keen wit and rare power of sarcasm, and these he used effectively to forward causes he espoused, and to expose the intrigues of his opponents. In *Absalom and Ahithophel*, Dryden describes him as :

“Jotham of piercing wit and pregnant thought,  
Endued by nature and by learning taught  
To move assemblies, who but only tried  
The worse a while, then chose the better side;  
Nor chose alone, but turned the balance too,  
So much the weight of one brave man can do.”

It was in the midst of rivalries of the different factions at Court that he issued his celebrated “character of a trimmer,” conveying in a seeming trifle the best counsel that could be given to the King, praising liberty, and enjoining the “necessary equilibrium of liberty and dominion in our constitution.” Soon after the death of King Charles II., in 1685, Halifax returned to Rufford, only however to busy himself in writing; and in June, 1688, he it was who drafted a petition to the King from the seven Bishops, whom he visited when they were confined in the tower. On the flight of James, Lord Halifax presided over the Council which provided for the safety of London; and when in December William of Orange summoned the peers, he was chosen their chairman. On the 24th December, on his advice, addresses were presented to William to undertake the provisional government. The Convention gathered January 22nd, 1689, and the peers chose him as their speaker. By his able leadership of the whig peers and his strategy, the opposition scheme was withdrawn; and, without a division, it was carried that William and Mary should be declared King and Queen. Halifax is said to have had the chief determining voice, next to Somers, in settling the instrument by which they were called to the throne; and it was he who, on 13th February, 1689, in the banquetting house at Whitehall, in the name of the estates of the realm, “solemnly requested the Prince and Princess to accept the crown.” Says Lord Macaulay: “He had distinguished himself pre-eminently in the Convention; nor was it without a peculiar propriety that he had been appointed to the honourable office of tendering the crown, in the name of all the Estates of England, to the Prince and Princess of Orange: for our revolution, as far as it can be said to bear the character of a single mind, assuredly bears the character of the large yet cautious mind of Halifax.”

“And yet,” he continues, “this revolution, of all revolutions the least violent, has been of all revolutions the most beneficent. It finally decided the great



question whether the popular element which had, ever since the age of Fitzwalter and De Montfort, been found in the English polity, should be destroyed by the monarchical element, or should be suffered to develop itself freely and to become dominant. The strife between the two principles had been long, fierce, and doubtful. It had lasted through four reigns. It had produced seditions, impeachments, rebellions, battles, sieges, proscriptions, judicial massacres. Sometimes liberty, sometimes royalty, had seemed to be on the point of perishing. During



The Drawing Room, Acton Priory.

many years one half of the energy of England had been employed in counteracting the other half. The executive power and the legislative power had so effectually impeded each other that the state had been of no account in Europe. The King-at-Arms, who proclaimed William and Mary before Whitehall Gate, did in truth announce that this great struggle was over; that there was entire union between the throne and the Parliament; that England, long dependant and degraded, was again a power of the first rank; that the ancient laws by which the prerogative

was bounded would thenceforth be held as sacred as the prerogative itself, and would be followed out to all their consequences; that the executive administration would be conducted in conformity with the sense of the representatives of the nation; and that no reform which the two Houses should after mature deliberation propose would be obstinately withstood by the sovereign. The Declaration of Right, though it made nothing law which had not been law before, contained the germ of the law which gave religious freedom to the Dissenter, of the law which secured the independence of the Judges, of the law which limited the duration of Parliaments, of the law which placed the liberty of the Press under the protection of juries, of the law which prohibited the slave trade, of the law which abolished the sacramental test, of the law which relieved the Roman Catholics from civil disabilities, of the law which reformed the representative system, of every good law which had been passed during more than a century and a half, of every good law which may hereafter, in the course of ages, be found necessary to promote the public weal, and to satisfy the demands of public opinion.

The highest eulogy which can be pronounced on the revolution of 1688 is this, that it was our last revolution. Several generations have now passed away since any wise and patriotic Englishman has meditated resistance to the established government. In all honest and reflecting minds there is a conviction, daily strengthened by experience, that the means of effecting every improvement which the constitution requires may be found within the constitution itself."

No apology is needed for so long an extract on the beneficent effects of that momentous event, in an account of historic Acton then closely connected with those stirring times as the retreat of Lord Halifax and others; particularly as the lesson the historian draws is of undiminished value.

Lord Halifax found Acton Priory more convenient than Rufford on account of its nearness to Court. After he had resigned the Privy Seal, and, in 1692, during the King's absence, had been struck off the Council, he was, that summer, twice visited by the Queen, who dined with him at Acton. Here he devoted himself with his old effectiveness to writing; and in the products of his pen his keen and balanced intellect appears to best advantage. His death took place at Halifax House on April 5th, 1695, and he was buried in Westminster. In the year 1740 the Duke of Newcastle owned the Priory, and made great alterations. He did away with the little garden at the then existing west front of the house and built a music room and spacious billiard room, bedrooms over it and garrets above, making the additions level with the original parts, and made the grand entrance northward. He also built a summer house on the top of the mound overlooking the road whence, it is said, it was a diversion to pelt the pack horses as they passed up and down.

Another of the notable owners of the Priory was Evelyn Pierrepont, first Duke of Kingston. After being returned member of parliament for Retford in 1690, he succeeded his brother William as fifth Earl of Kingston in the same year, and was appointed one of the Commissioners for the union with Scotland, 10th April, 1706. He was created Marquis of Dorchester, admitted to the Privy Council, and on the 10th of August, 1715, was created Duke of Kingston-upon-Hull. Later he was appointed Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, and became Lord President of the Council, and a Knight of the Garter. In the reproduction of an old plate already shown will be seen a portrait of his ancestor Robert Pierrepont the first Earl of Kingston (1584-1643), who, when the Civil war broke out, desired to remain neutral and declared, "When I take arms with the King against the Parliament, or with the Parliament against the King, let a cannon-bullet divide me between them." This was strangely fulfilled after he had joined the King's forces, was taken prisoner



and was cut in two by a Royalist cannon ball fired into the boat that was conveying him and other prisoners to Hull.

The first Duke is described as one of the most prominent leaders of the fashionable world of his day, and Macky writes of him, in 1705: "He hath a very good estate, is a very fine gentleman, of good sense, well-bred, and a lover of the ladies: entirely in the interest of his country; makes a good figure, is of a black complexion, well made, not forty years old."

Mary, the eldest of his three daughters, by his first wife, married Edward Wortley Montagu, and is said to have resided at Acton Priory, where she was frequently visited by Pope. Lady Mary was a precocious child and early displayed uncommon ability. Her father,

though a man of the world, was proud of her, and it is said that before she was eight years of age he sent for her to the Kit-Cat Club, of which he was a member, when she was elected by acclamation. She became a great reader, and was the friend of Mary Astell, the



Lord Lytton's Library,  
The Priory, Acton.

advocate and defender of women's rights in her day. Through another friend, Anne, daughter of Sidney Wortley Montagu, second son of the Earl of Sandwich, she became acquainted with her friend's brother, Edward, who sought her hand. Lady Mary's father, refused his consent, and ordered his

daughter to marry another man. Preparations were made for this event, settlements drawn, and the wedding day fixed, "when Lady Mary left the house and was married to Edward Montagu by special license, 12th August, 1712." When the first ministry of King George I. was formed, Montagu, whose cousin Lord Halifax, was First Lord, was made one of the Commissioners of the Treasury, and it is said that "he was the only man of the board who could talk French, and who could therefore converse with the King." Lady



Formerly the Dining Room, now used as a Billiard Room.



Mary had the friendship of the Princess of Wales, afterwards Queen Caroline. Her husband was appointed Ambassador to Turkey and while at Adrianople she noted their practice of inoculation for smallpox—had her son treated, and endeavoured to introduce this practice when she returned to England. She was for many years a leader in London society and had for a time the close friendship of Pope. It was through this intimacy that she and her husband were persuaded to take a cottage at Twickenham, where Pope resided. A quarrel ensuing gave rise to much recrimination on both sides. The cause from which the difference arose has been variously given, but seems to have been trifling.

Fielding was her second cousin, and her favour was sought by Young, the author of the "Night Thoughts." Like most satirical wits, she did not escape making enemies. Much of the latter part of her life was spent abroad, whither she went expecting her husband to follow her, but they did not again meet, since he had apparently given himself up to little beyond money saving. It is reported that, when he died in 1761, at the age of 83, he left the sum of £1,350,000. When her son-in-law, Lord Bute became Secretary of State (1761) his wife besought her mother to return to England. She did so, but did not long survive. Having reached England early in the year 1762, she died on the 21st August of the same year. In Lichfield Cathedral there is a cenotaph erected to her, commemorating her introduction of inoculation. In 1713 her sister, Lady Frances Pierrepont, married the Earl of Mar, then Secretary of State for Scotland.

The first Duke's son, William, Earl of Kingston, died 1st July, 1713, leaving a son who succeeded to the titles of his grandfather, as second Duke of Kingston, on the 5th March, 1726. During the rebellion in 1745 a regiment of light horse, which he raised at his own cost, took part in April in the battle of Culloden. On John Rocque's map, from an actual survey of that date, it will be seen that the Duke of Kingston was then in possession of Acton Priory. "The crest of this nobleman" says Brewer "is still remaining among the stucco ornaments of a principal apartment, and it may be remarked that he was often visited in this mansion by King George II. A later proprietor (Colonel Clutton) bestowed Gothic Embellishments, partaking of the ecclesiastical character, on the chief parts of the building. These alterations are designed with much sobriety, and the northern façade is productive of a pleasing effect. Mr. Akers has, at his residence, a large and valuable collection of books." As this second Duke of Kingston died at Bath in 1773 without issue, all his honours became extinct. He had gone through the ceremony of marriage with the notorious Elizabeth Chudleigh, the wife of the Hon. Augustus John Hervey, afterwards third Earl of Bristol, in 1769. At the death of the Countess of Bristol in 1788, the Priory with the other Kingston estates, devolved upon Mr. Charles Meadows, who assumed his uncle's patronymic of Pierrepont, and was created Earl Manvers in 1796.

The Priory has a well or water reservoir which in the days of monastic occupation might well have served for the preservation alive of fish for fast days. There are traditions of a subterranean passage having existed between this building and Friars Place, and there is a passage for a short distance still in fact in existence, starting under the north west turret of the Priory and running in a northerly direction. It is however blocked with rubbish and only a few feet of it are traversible.

Among the private families who inhabited the Priory was a silk merchant named Edwin Leaf, whose widow was remembered by the late Mrs. Elizabeth Bourne, an old resident of Acton, as a very fine character. The most distinguished of the more recent occupants was Lord Lytton, the novelist, whose tenancy expired in 1836. General Atto was the next in residence after Lord Lytton, the latter portion of whose lease he completed, and soon afterwards the property was bought

for a nunnery of the order of the "Sacred Heart," when Madame Gould was Abbess. A convent school for girls was kept in a portion of the coach house building. The community so increased that the Priory was found too small, and an estate was purchased at Roehampton to which the nuns removed. In the year 1849 the Priory was purchased by Mr. George Drafford Heald, a young man who had inherited property yielding an income of several thousands per annum. The house was thoroughly repaired and refurnished, twelve months being occupied in getting it ready for him. Booths and swings were put in the grounds, a boat on the lake, luxuriant shrubberies planted, and the lake stocked with fish; the arches



Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton.

and doors of the mansion hung with velvet curtains, and the whole was sumptuously furnished—and now for a brief period there came to it one of the remarkable women of the first half of last century; one whose character was open to so much criticism and condemnation, that these might well act to the exclusion of any thought of nobler qualities and any recognition of the possibilities of what might have been, had her life developed differently.

This was the celebrated Lola Montez, as she was generally called, whose chequered life of forty three years was more sensational and startling than the most extravagant romance. Somewhat of its sad story has been told by herself and others have written her life. Here only a few references can be made. She

now became the wife of Mr. Heald and was well remembered by the late Mrs. Bourne, who lived to an advanced age. Of Mr. Heald, Mrs. Bourne said: "He sent for me to mind the Lodge for four months, and I dwelt there for thirty five years." He was only just of age when on the 19th of July, 1849, at St. George's, Hanover Square, he married Marie Dolores Eliza Rosanna Gilbert—for such was the real name of Lola Montez. She was now thirty one, but twelve years (without parallel even in the life of an adventuress), had passed since, like so many others in those earlier days, her life was marred at its very outset by a hasty runaway match to avoid marriage against her will to an old man with a title. She was born in Limerick, but on the death of her father an ensign in the 44th foot in India, her mother, who was of Spanish descent, married again; and a year later, when Marie was only eight, she was sent by her stepfather to Montrose, Scotland, to be educated. The close of her life shows how providential this part of her experience became. During the intervening years she had accompanied her first husband to India, had been separated from him for her alleged unfaithfulness, became a dancer in London and afterwards in Berlin, was honoured at St. Petersburg and received costly presents from the Czar, in Paris was to have married the editor of "*La Presse*" who was killed in a duel, and in 1847 reached Munich, where she was to achieve the most conspicuous of her influences in this part of her life. Within a few days of her appearance on the stage there as a dancer, the Bavarian King, Ludwig Carl Augustus, became enamoured, and presented her at court as his 'best friend.' The Rev. Hawks, the writer of a short account of her life, says:—

"She was created Baroness of Rosenthal and Countess of Lansfeldt. The King also settled a large estate upon her, with feudal rights and a population of two thousand persons. She became interested in politics, and a prominent intriguer at the Bavarian Court.

"The natural kindness of her disposition, her large sympathies and liberal tendencies, induced her to use her power for the good of the people. She is said to have shown wisdom and ability in its exercise, foiling, by her skill and audacity, the designs of Metternich. . . . Her policy, however, excited the opposition of the Bavarian Cabinet; and the disgraceful course of the King precipitated the revolution of 1848. In the popular disturbances of that time she was driven from Munich by the revolutionists, and, in the disguise of a peasant girl, escaped into Switzerland, where she found a refuge.

Wonderful as had been her rapid elevation to the summit of her earthly prosperity, her fall was still more sudden. Her estates were confiscated; and having, like the prodigal of old, 'wasted her substance with riotous living,' she was reduced to a condition of poverty and distress. The day of her extravagance and folly was, in its best aspect, but 'gilded misery.' As she expresses it in her diary; a 'dark discontent' had been ever present with her."

It was on her return to England after these extraordinary adventures that she was married to Mr. Heald. In less than a month from that date she was summoned on a charge of bigamy by an aunt of her husband. Mr. Heald seems to have sold his position in the 2nd Life Guards after his marriage and together they went to Spain, where it is stated, two sons were born to them. She does not herself refer to them, and it may be that this statement is inaccurate. The marriage was evidently not altogether a happy one. Of Heald's death, a few years after, different accounts are given: one is that he was drowned in 1853 at Lisbon, another that his health failing in 1856, he put up the Acton Priory for sale, and before this



took place he had died. In less than three years after this last mentioned marriage, Lola Montez was in New York again, upon the stage, and a year and a half later, in California, was once more married; this time to the proprietor of one of the San Francisco newspapers. This union was of short duration; and her life of adventure subsequently included visits to Europe and Australia, when, an article



Lola Montez (Marie Dolores Gilbert).

(Copyright T. Werner Laurie).

appearing in one of the newspapers reflecting on her character, she horsewhipped the editor. Another visit to France and then she returned to America, where she afterwards became a public lecturer upon various topics. These lectures, says Rev. Hawks, "proved highly remunerative pecuniarily; but with characteristic improvidence, she dispensed so freely as to lay up but a small portion of her earnings." Of her the "American Law Journal" said:—

"Let Lola Montez have credit for her talents, intelligence, and her support of popular rights. As a political character she held, until her retirement from Switzerland, an important position in Bavaria and Germany, besides having agents and correspondents in various parts of Europe. On foreign politics she has clear ideas, and has been treated by the political men of the country as a substantive power. She always kept state secrets, and could be consulted in safety in cases in which her original habits of thought rendered her of service. Acting under her advice the King had pledged himself to a course of steady improvement to the people.

Although she wielded so much power, it is alleged that she never used it for the promotion of unworthy persons, or, as other favourites have done, for corrupt purposes, and there is reason to believe that political feeling influenced her course, not sordid considerations."

In an interesting life of Lola Montez, by E. B. d'Aubergne (T. Werner Laurie, Clifford's Inn, Publisher,—by whose permission her portrait is reproduced) the author says:—

"When Europe lay under the heel of Metternich and the Ultramontanes, she, almost single-handed, struck a blow for freedom. The wiles of the cleverest intriguers in Europe proved powerless against her bold policy. At scheming she was no adept, trusting, as the strong will ever trust, to her force and personality to defeat the manœuvres of her foes. Had Louis of Bavaria not bowed before the storm she and his kingdom would have played a great part in European history. As it was, to her intervention Switzerland partly owes the freedom of her institutions from clerical control." And now came a change more memorable than all these dramatic incidents. On one of her last visits to New York, when broken in health and to a great extent deserted, she met, in a well known Christian lady, one whom she had known as a school-mate in her girlhood at Montrose, and who had now sought her out. "Surprised and gratified by the unlooked for kindness of the recognition, Lola Montez at once reposed confidence and trust in her friend" and, continues the account, "the whisper of the Holy Spirit which comes to every human soul, which she, like such multitudes of others, was willing madly to stifle, instead of cherishing with jealous care as one of the best gifts of a merciful God—she appears now at last to have listened to. From this time she seemed to be impressed with religious truth, and her convictions were deep and sincere. She studied the Scriptures faithfully. The glorious truths they reveal dawned upon her soul, and, by the power of the Blessed Spirit, wrought in her that renewal of her inner being which manifested itself in a sincere and earnest effort to walk humbly with her God, and to follow closely in the foot-prints of her gracious Redeemer, in whom was centred all her hope of Salvation."

The reality of this great change was manifested immediately by the completeness of her altered life, as vouched for in a statement of one who witnessed it. Some extracts from that statement close this narrative. It was also shown in the out-pouring of her contrited spirit in her own diary, a few fragments from which follow. She writes:—

"With what gratitude ought I give thanks to Him who did not forsake me, even when walking in utter darkness and death! I knew not, neither cared for or thought of His love. How many, many years of my life have been sacrificed to Satan and my own love of sin! . . . What would I not give to have my terrible and fearful experience given as an awful warning to such natures as my own! And yet when people generally, even to my mother, turned their backs on me and knew me not, Jesus knocked at my heart's door—oh! so gently; but 'twas He alone!

And in the deep dark hour of my mental agony, which no mortal eye saw, my Saviour came to the darkest sinner, and brought a sweet light around me. Oh! how long, long was He telling me that I should come to Him. I was indeed weary and heavy laden! O my Teacher! I did come to Thee. Thou did'st indeed give me peace. All that Thou did'st say in Thy words of balm are true. Thou hast been too good to me. But I owed Thee much, and Thou did'st forgive me much. My prayers to Thee, God of mercy and love, remain not unanswered. Thou surely dost cast comfort around my soul in my lonely and unloved, uncared for earth life. . . . O my Master, my loved Saviour! lead me, guide me, teach me, is my prayer. Before Thee let me feel as a little child. What is my worldly knowledge in Thy sight?—an impediment to get to Thee. What has the world ever given to me? (and I have known *all* that the world has to give—All!). Nothing but shadows, leaving a wound on the heart hard to heal—a dark discontent. . . . To-morrow (the Lord's

day) is the day of peace and happiness. Once it seemed to me anything but a



The Priory (south).



The Priory (west).

happy day, but now all is wonderfully changed in my heart; I can well understand how David sang in his joy and gladness, the praises of God. And yet he had not Jesus to go to as a friend, a brother, a God. *This is my song of praise.* Thou did'st lead me from death to life. I was blind, and now I see. I was deaf, now I hear. What I loved before, now I hate. But oh! to leave Thee one moment is to perish. Oh! that in this coming week I may, through Thee, overcome all sinful thoughts, and love everyone. Keep my tongue from evil speaking and lying; make me charitable in thought, in word, and in deed. Watch over me, dear Lord. Amen!

Dear Lord, compel my hasty temper to be controlled, and give me an humble heart. Oh! what great gifts are these—an humble heart. . . . All that has passed in New York has not been mere illusion. *I feel it is true.* The Lord heard my feeble cry to Him, and I felt what no human tongue can describe. Such feelings belong not to pen, or will, or words. The world cast me out, and He, the pure, the loving, took me in. . . . O my dear Father! watch over me in the Lord. O happy earthly Father! to have been taken so young from this world of sorrow. And yet the Creator of all knows best how to dispose of all. . . . Lord,



The Priory (east).



have mercy on the weary wanderer, and grant me all I beseech of Thee. Oh ! give me a meek and lowly heart. Amen."

There can be no doubt of the reality and truth of the spirit breathing in these words. In this, her new character, she became constant to the end. She devoted the last few months of her life to visiting the poor outcasts of her own sex at the Magdalen Asylum, near New York ; and to them she left the little remnant of her property. While thus labouring she was suddenly stricken down with paralysis. Though for a time she rallied, it was not for long. The strenuous world-life had taken its toll of the fine constitution and beautiful form. " Day by day her strength failed, but her faith became firmer and brighter." On the 19th of January, 1861, " while the word of life was yet sounding in her ears, with her hand resting upon her much-loved Bible, her spirit passed to the presence of its God." In a wintry storm, on the day after her decease, a friend selected the place of her burial in beautiful Greenwood cemetery, and there a marble tablet was erected to mark the spot. From the printed testimony of the Rev. Francis L. Hawks, D.D., of the Protestant Episcopal Church, which was published fifty years ago, the following is taken :—

" For myself I became quite satisfied, and am now that, as far as a poor mortal can judge, God the Holy Ghost had renewed her poor sinful soul unto holiness. I think she had been taught from on high, by a blessed experience, ' the secret of the Lord.' There was no confident boasting, however. I never saw a more humble penitent, nor one more overwhelmed than she was by the thought that Christ's blood could save such a sinner as she felt herself to have been. When I prayed with her nothing could exceed the fervour of her devotion. And never had I a more watchful and attentive hearer when I read the Scriptures. She read the blessed volume for herself, also, when I was not present. It was always within reach of her hand, and on my first visit, when I took up her Bible from the table, the fact struck me that it opened of its own accord to the touching story of Christ's forgiveness of the Magdalene woman at the house of Simon. I spoke to her of Christ's gentle pity and pardon to this poor woman. ' Ah,' she replied, ' but she loved much ; *can I love enough ?* ' If ever a repentant soul loathed past sin, I believe hers did. If ever a renewed soul prayed fervently for the help of the Holy Spirit to keep her from all sin, I think hers did. She was a woman of genius, highly accomplished, of more than usual attainments, of great natural eloquence. I listened to her sometimes with admiration as, with the tears streaming from her eyes, her right hand uplifted, and her singularly expressive features (her keen black eye especially) speaking almost as plainly as her tongue, she would dwell upon Christ, and the almost incredible truth that He could show mercy to such a vile sinner as she felt herself to have been, until I would feel myself that *she* was the preacher, and not I. When she was near her end and could not speak, I asked her to let me know by a sign whether her soul was at peace, and she still felt that Christ would save her. She fixed her eyes on mine and nodded her head affirmatively. I thank God that I can believe she found forgiveness through the precious blood of Christ, and that her departed spirit rests in comfort in the paradise of God (F.L.H.)."

As the incident of the woman at Samaria brought numbers of her town folk to hear and witness the reality of the Christ, may the recalling of the message of the life of Lola Montez—with its disappointment and dark discontent from ambitions and world gratifications, and its seeking and finding the Lord, help some in like manner to come to the Christ for new life and soul refreshment.

The next owner of the Priory was Mr. John Dawson, formerly of Essex and Liverpool. The property remained in this family a long time, his daughter, Miss Lucy Dawson, to whom the writer is indebted for information and illustrations kindly given, having lived there for twenty-six years.

The estate then contained eleven acres. The small lake extended from the bottom of the gardens along Avenue Road. It was oblong in shape, the banks high on the north side, and on the south it was bounded by a path along the irregular wall. Towards the western end there was a rustic bridge, and at the other an outlet going towards the Thames.

When the Dawsons took possession there were no houses between the Priory and a small house of the stationmaster at the station; and from their dining room there was an uninterrupted view towards Hammersmith. Mrs. Dawson lived to be ninety years of age. The property was next purchased by a land company. Most of it is now covered with dwellings, the public baths, municipal buildings, and the Court House. The Priory itself alone remains. In its large entrance hall the oak staircase is very similar to that found in the old Manor House, East Acton. The drawing-room is richly decorated, the walls ornamented with panels, and from the corner of it spiral steps in the hexagonal tower lead to the upper part of the buildings. The library, used by Lord Lytton, is on the eastern side, and here he may possibly have written "The Last Days of Pompeii" and some of his other works. The date of his legal separation from his wife appears



Remains of Old Gateway, Acton Priory Grounds, before removal.



Priory Coach House.

Formerly on the site of the new Municipal Buildings.



A Corner of the old Priory Grounds.

to be the same as that of his giving up the tenancy of the Priory already noted. The late Mrs. Bourne, so long the lodge keeper of the Priory, indulged in poetic and prose writing, in which she mentions having received encouragement from Lord Shaftesbury, Leigh Hunt, and others. Those who remember quiet old Acton, with its village atmosphere, may appreciate the following selection :—

#### THE VILLAGE BELLS.

Hark ! the village bells at morning  
Ringing in another day,  
Here a christ'ning, there a wedding,  
Hearts are light and music gay.

Hark ! the village bells at midday,  
Deep and solemn, dismal stave ;  
Sad and slow, with steps unsteady,  
Mourners reach the silent grave.

At each knell their eyes are filling,  
Fancy hears an infants' lore,  
Happy cherub, sweetly singing :  
" Mother ! Mother, weep no more."

Some will love the lively measure,—  
All will mourn the sad farewells ;  
But the merry chimes give pleasure  
From the ancient village bells.

Hark ! the village bells at evening  
Gaily chiming, " farewell day,"—  
Some are changed, and all are changing,  
Softly sing time's parting lay,

Till we're lull'd in happy slumbers,  
O'erpower'd by the magic spells—  
For e'en your melancholy numbers  
Charm and soothe, sweet village bells.

Who, unmoved, can hear your music  
Ringing back past scenes of old,  
Ne'er has looked beyond this fabric  
For the promised land of gold.

(ELIZABETH BOURNE).

Between the Priory and the Manor House, East Acton, there stood a substantial windmill on the elevated ground of the Acton Park east of the Churchfield Road Railway Station. On an old map of the Church fields and surrounding district its position is shown, as well as the old footpath crossing these fields to East Acton before the laying out of the roads and streets of the present time. A picture of the Mill with the houses adjoining has kindly been loaned for reproduction by Mrs. George Harper,\* a former resident of Acton ; and to her son, R. W. Harper, Esq., of King's Bench Walk, who has held many inquiries for the settlement of district boundaries in Middlesex, I am indebted for information and the use of maps and plans showing early dispositions of property in the town. He was born in Acton and has recalled the dread felt by the village boys and their fear if called to pass at night over the churchfields footpath lest they should meet the ghost of the beheaded Earl issuing from the iron gates of the Derwentwater House. Education has dispelled many a former boyhood terror.

\* The death of Mrs. Harper has taken place since the above was written.





Outline from an Old Map showing position of Windmill.

its surrounding of stately trees and with its very entrance gateway hidden away from view behind a high wall and overgrown with creepers, was perhaps, a chief if not sufficient reason for this neglect. The old wrought iron gates themselves were carried away to the eastern side of the park, and were for a time used as hurdles near the pond, half buried in the soil and nearly rusted through. The position of the Manor House was within wooded grounds, on the opposite side of the road, almost adjoining the north-east corner of the Acton Park. The

It is perhaps scarcely to the credit of the neighbourhood and town of Acton that the next old mansion to be described, the Acton Manor House, should have been so little known in recent years, and that it should have been taken down about a year ago without any attempt to preserve it. Once it was to the villagers "The Great House." Of late, probably not one person in twenty was even aware of its existence. The secluded position, amidst



The Windmill formerly in Acton Park. From an old painting.  
It stood on the north-west portion of the park.



From a sketch of the Old Manor House, Acton,  
before the removal of its verandah.

just discernible, surmounted with stone balls and capitals, and a heavy growth of vines and creepers. This was at one time the main entrance. It was closed, tradition says, after a visit of Queen Elizabeth, but appearances were against the story.

The drive swept round from the west to the eastern doorway, which opened into the oak panelled hall, while the low French doors of the mansion afforded ready entrance also on the west and south. Upon all the old maps of Acton, the little hamlet of East Acton is figured as standing distinct from the village which clustered around the Parish Church, and perhaps at the present moment East Acton retains as many traces of those early days as any portion of the district.

existence of the old gateway would not be discovered unless it was keenly sought. Passing eastward in front of the Goldsmith's Alms Houses and taking the next turning northward, and stopping about midway in the high brick wall, now completely built up, brought one directly opposite the spot where the remains of the former entrance stood, at a little distance from the wall itself, over which, if one were driving, the old brick piers were



Picturesque Old Tree and Creeper in the Manor House Grounds.

The old Manor House stood within its ample grounds, and its oak panelled walls and corridors and its carvings and ornamentation gave some indication of its importance in times long past. The house was, however, out of repair, and had not been tenanted for a number of years except a few apartments used by a caretaker. The early history of this mansion is wrapped in obscurity.

It was a large red brick house, square, and more commodious than many planned in a more picturesque style. It was surely worthy a better fate than to become an utter ruin and to disappear.

The principal entrance was on the eastern side by an unpretentious doorway under a moulded canopy, and opened into a spacious hall paved with marble.



Original Gateway to the Acton Manor House.

Both dining-room and library on this floor had their wide oak panelled walls and richly ornamented mantelpieces.

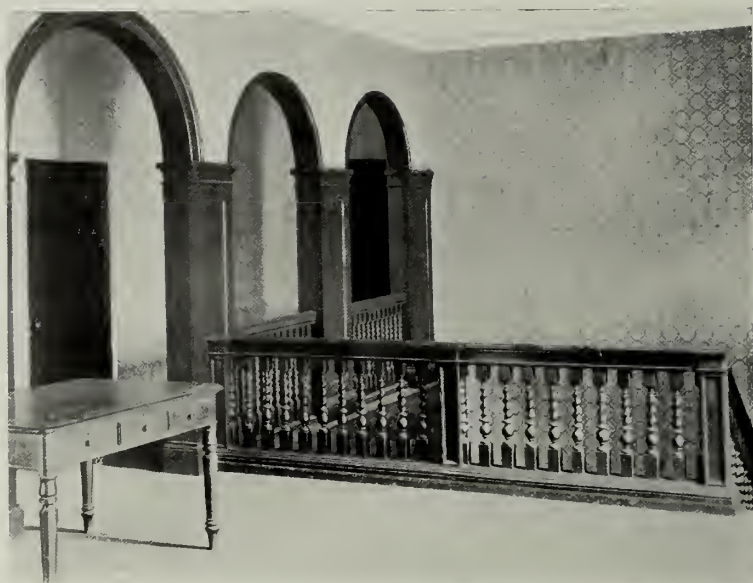
From the right hand corner of the hall, a well preserved square oak staircase broken into three flights, gave the ascent to the upper halls of the Mansion. The passages opening from these gave access to the various apartments on this floor, and at the north end a further staircase led to the unusually spacious chambers on the upper or garret floor lighted by old-fashioned dormer windows.

There was here an old leaden tank, dated 1727 similar to the one already described as formerly in Derwentwater House. Within the recollection of the



older inhabitants a verandah ran along the southern side of the house. An illustration of this was preserved in a sketch made many years ago by Mr. H. Kingsford.

The original Manor House is said to have been built by Edward, Viscount Conway, Secretary of State to James I. and afterwards to King Charles I. The writer has not been able to verify this statement, but there seems reasonable ground for



Acton Manor House first floor landing.



Acton Manor House staircase.

supposing that Viscount Conway occupied it. He was the son of Sir John Conway, Governor of Ostend, who, when in London in 1578, was assaulted—as we learn from a quaint letter of Gilbert Taylor and his wife to the Earl and Countess of Shrewsbury - (Lodge's Illustrations British History):—

“Sr John Conway was goynge in the streetes, Mr. Lodovyke Grevell came soddenly uppon him and stroke him on the hedd wth. a great cougell, and felled him: and, beyng doune, stroke at him with a sworde, and but for one of Sr John Conway's men, who warded the blow, he had cutt of his legges; yet did he hurte him sumwhat on bothe his shyynns: The Councell sent for Lodovyke Grevell, and have comyttd him to the Marchallcye.”

The account tells how on the same day, “My Lorde Rytche was rydyng in the streetes, there was one Wyndam that stode in a dore and shotte a dagge [a long

heavy pistol] at him thynkyng to have slayne him." Fortunately Wyndam's servant, whom he had charged that morning to load his "dagge" with two bullets, "doubtyng he mente to doe some myschefe" had loaded with powder and paper only, so the Lord Rich escaped unhurt. "I am forced to trouble your Honors with thes tryflynge matters for I know no greater."

And Lodge adds, "It would seem by the light manner in which he speaks of



Eastern Main Entrance Acton Manor House.

these savage attacks that they were not uncommon at that time." Of Sir John Conway's son and heir, Lodge further states:—

"Sir Edward Conway was knighted at the taking of Cadiz, and at this time Governor of the Brill. Toward the end of the next reign he was appointed a Secretary of State, and soon after created Lord Conway of Rayley in Warwickshire. Charles the First continued him in the Secretaryship, and advanced him to the



titles of Viscount Conway in England, and Viscount Killultagh in Ireland. He died President of the Council Jan. 3, 1630."

In a letter of Sir John Harrington to the Earl of Shrewsbury (Talbot Papers) there is the following reference to a visit of Sir Edward from the Netherlands:—

"For Low Contrey newes, Sr. Edward Conway, of the Brill, aryved heer yesternight; and owt of his speaches wee that are of the Court; but not of the Counsell, doe gather, that, eyther for lack of vittell or of speryt, thear hath yet been no fyghtinge. For Iryshe news, the Spanyards are still expected."

Edward, Viscount Conway, died in London, it is said, 3rd January, 1630 or 1631. Of the Viscountess, Lysons, in his description of St. Mary's Church, Acton, says:—

"On the wall of the Chancel is the monument of Catherine, Viscountess Conway, who died at her house at Acton, June 30th, 1639. She was wife of Edward Viscount Conway, principal Secretary of State to King James and Charles I. and daughter of Giles Hueriblock of Ghent in Flanders. This lady bequeathed a considerable part of her fortune to charitable uses, as is expressed in her epitaph."

This epitaph on the Viscountess Conway is as follows:—

"MEMORIAE SACRUM.

To the honour and memorie of the Right worthy and religious ladie Katherine Viscountess Conway Wife to the Righ. Ho<sup>ble</sup>. the Lord Conway sometime Chief Secretaire of State, and in his latter time President of the Kings Ma<sup>tes</sup> most Hon<sup>ble</sup> previe Councell Who besides her pious and large bountie expressed towards the English Dutch Churches in her life did at her death bequeath these Legacies to Charitable uses.

First besides 10 Pounds at her Funeral to the Poore of Acton in the Countie of Middlesex two £200 to the Company of Grocers for the yearly payment of Tenn Pounds to the Poore of the for named Acton for ever the payment to begin immediately after the Companies Receipt of the money by equal portions Quarterly to the Dutch Church three 300 P. hundred pounds in money the Annual proffitt whereof are to be distributed among the Poor thereof at the direction of the Deacons, after the decease of her Niece these Legacies viz Tenn Pounds more to be distributed among the Poor of the said Acton annually for ever by two equal portions the one at the feast of the Nativity of our Lord the other at the Feast of Penticost to the Poor of Acton likewise after the expiration of three annuities for lives the sum of 20 Pounds annually for ever to the Poor of the Parish of Luddington besides 5 Pounds in money at her funeral 5 Pounds yearly and for ever. To 3 Prisons in London (viz) Ludgate and the 2 Compters besides 12 Pounds in money for ever 4 P. to each 10 tenn Pounds yearly and for ever towards the Releaving of Poore Prisoners from thence 5 P to the release 2 out of Ludgate and 5 P to release other 2 the one out of the Compter in Wood Streete the other out of the Compter in the Poultre to Christs Church Hospital 20 P yearly for ever. To the Poor in the Parish of St. Dunston's in the East 10 P. yearly for ever. To 5 Poor widows such as have been wives to men free of the company of the Grocers 5 P yearly and for ever Viz each of them annually 20 shillings.

The Poor who did thy life in Prayer befriend  
And on thy Funeral herse in teares attend  
Show their devotion still and send on high

Their Prayers for thy blessed Charitie,  
May thy example others teach to give  
That when they die their fame (like thine)  
may live."

Bowack notes:—"The Lady here interred was married to the Right Honourable Edward Viscount Conway, descended of an antient Knightly family. His ancestor Sir Henry Conway was a great favourite of Richard II., and his grandfather and father eminently signalized themselves in the service of their country against the Scots and Spaniards."



Until quite a recent date a number of the most aged, sick, or needy received each week a 2d. loaf from Lady Conway's bequest. The display of these loaves every Sunday in the Acton parish church and the giving of this bread has been discontinued since the year 1901, the money being now put to the Almshouses Endowment Fund.

Edward, the eldest son of the Viscount, succeeded his father, and was created Earl of Conway in 1679. His wife was the celebrated Anne, Viscountess Conway,



Manor House, Acton, view from the south-west—now demolished.

renowned as a metaphysician, and an accomplished scholar in the learned tongues, who was the friend of Dr. Henry More, the theologian, of great repute for intellectual power and saintliness, whose biographer called the Viscountess his "heroine pupil." She was attracted by the views and principles of the Society of Friends, and held earnest conferences with George Fox, William Penn, and Robert Barclay, who were amongst its chief founders. In his journal, Fox refers to a visit in 1678 to "Ragley, in Warwickshire, to visit Lady Conway, who I understood was

very desirous to see me, and whom I found tender and loving, and willing to detain me longer than I had freedom to stay." This was probably not a great while before her death. To her friend, Dr. Henry More, she wrote: "Your conversation with them (the Friends) at London might be, as you express it, charitably intended, like that of a physician frequenting his patients for the increase or confirmation of their health; but I must confess, that my converse with them is to receive health and refreshment from them." She died, it is said, steadily adhering to her new belief of scripture truth, as held by Friends.

Another resident of the Manor House, whose benefactions were of considerable value was Alderman Perryn.

It appears from the returns made to the Charity Commissioners in 1836, and to the City Companies Commission in 1880, that Alderman John Perryn, formerly of East Acton, by his Will of the 18th December, 1656, left to the Wardens and Commonalty of the Mystery of Goldsmiths, London, all his freehold messuages, farms, lands, tenements and hereditaments in Acton, which consisted in 1836 of one farm of about 159 acres let to Thomas Church for 21 years from Michaelmas 1808, first at £653 17s. 5d., reduced at Michaelmas 1815, to £548 7s. od., and then to £480 os. od.; another farm of about 42 acres let to Thomas Essex until 1840 at £350 os. od.; a house and lands about 20 acres known as the Mansion House (evidently the Manor House) let to John Elderton Allen and then to Charles Gray Graves for 21 years from Lady Day 1809 at £160 os. od.; a garden let to Richard Carruthers Corne at £6 6s. od.; about half an acre of land let on a building lease for 61 years from Lady Day 1817 to James Heath (who built two houses thereon) at £21 os. od.; land and garden about 4a. 3r. 28p. held by James Heath as yearly tenant at £40 12s. od.; together amounting to £1057 18s. od. The income of the whole of the trust estate including invested funds was in 1879 £1519 15s. 1d. The farm, formerly the Acton Stud Farm, or part of it, is now the Acton Golf Course.

In 1812 twenty almshouses were built at a total cost of about £12,000, on part of the estate for ten men and ten women who received in 1835 each £10 a year in addition to their regular pensions and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  or 2 chaldrons of coal each, and a gratuity of £1 each at the annual visitation, making up the annual charge to £372 10s. od. as follows:—addition to the pensions, £200 os. od.; coal about £100 os. od.; gratuity and visitation, £20 os. od.; superintendent, matron and labourer, £52 10s. od.; amounting together to £372 10s. od.

Other charges on this estate in 1836 were as follows:—To the Churchwardens of the parish of Acton, £10 os. od.; Churchwardens of St. Vedast and St. Sepulchre £5 each, £10 os. od.; Churchwardens and Overseers of the Parish of Bromyard, Hereford, £52 os. od.; to 26 almsmen of the second class of the Company's Pensioners (the origin of this payment does not appear), £13 1s. 4d.; to two of the settled pensioners, £18 4s. od.; to 90 almswomen of the settled pensioners £8 each, £720 os. od.; to 40 of the unsettled pensions £2 each, £80 os. od.; once in seven years the Company attend a sermon at St. Vedast Church and give to the Clergyman and the poor of the parish £8 or £10, say per annum £1 5s. od.: £904 10s. 4d.; to which adding the payments to Acton almspeople of £372 10s. od. as stated, brings the total to the sum of £1277 os. 4d.

The payment to Bromyard, where John Perryn was born, includes £26 a year for a lecture to be preached on Monday of every week being the market day there in the forenoon, by six or eight several godly learned divines who are to receive 10s. for every sermon. The £10 a year to the poor of East Acton to be distributed quarterly amongst them at the discretion of the churchwardens.



The service once in seven years at St. Vedast, Foster Lane, is to be by some orthodox divine and afterwards the Company are to return to their Hall and dine together. He left also £5 a year to Christ's Hospital towards the maintenance of the poor children there, and £5 a year towards the maintenance of one scholar that should be bred up a bluecoat in Christ College and sent to Oxford or Cambridge.

These two annuities were redeemed by the Company in 1811 for £242.



Rear of Acton  
Manor House, and old Mounting Block.

He left the residue of his property to be disposed of in pious and charitable uses, for poor members of the Company, for exhibitions at the Universities and other charitable uses.

The payments to the 90 settled and 40 unsettled pensioners are made apparently under the general bequest of the residue, and supplement their pensions derived



from other charitable bequests of the Company. Up to 1880 the Company had expended £9917 on the erection of St. Dunstan's Church, East Acton, and in that year paid the Vicar £375 for his stipend for three quarters of a year. Amongst other names occurring more recently in connection with property under this trust are Thomas Toynbee in connection with "Glendover House" in 1868; Joseph Spence of "The Hawthorns, late Englands," in 1872; Charles Walton of the Mansion or Manor House in 1873, who had occupied it from 1856; Edward Fowler of "The Grange" 1880, and J. B. Bonin of "The Friars" in 1880. Sir Walter Prideaux has kindly given the following extracts from the records of the Goldsmith's Company:—

"1657, February 26—Memorandum that John Perryn, Esquire, late Alderman of London, and a worthy Member of this Company, departed this life on Thursday the 26th February, 1659, at his house in East Acton in the County of Middlesex.

"1657, March 7th—A sum of £20 is received from Alice, Widow of Alderman Perryn, for distribution among the poor of the Company.

"1657, April 13—A copy of the last Will and Testament with a Codicil thereunto annexed of Alderman Perryn is read, and a Committee are appointed to advise with Counsel about the Charitable trusts reposed in the Company thereby and the gift to be distributed by the Wardens. Warden Hall and others go, shortly afterwards, to Mr. Palmer 'the counsellor of the Temple' about Perryn's Will—subsequently Mr. Brown and afterwards Sir Orlando Bridgeman are also consulted."

Alderman Perryn was buried in the Acton Parish Church. The slab only of the tablet erected to his memory is preserved at the west end of the church. The memorial reads as follows:—

"Here lyeth interred y<sup>e</sup> Body of John Perryn Esq<sup>r</sup> late Alderman of y<sup>e</sup> City of London and one of y<sup>e</sup> Commissioners of y<sup>e</sup> Peace for y<sup>e</sup> County of Midd. who by his last Will and Testam<sup>t</sup> did (after ye decease of M<sup>rs</sup>. Alice Perryn his loveing wife and sole Executrix) give & bequeath all his lands in y<sup>e</sup> Parish of East Acton to Pious and Charitable uses for ever—The sum of twenty six pounds p. annu. to maintaine a weekly Lecture forever to be preached in y<sup>e</sup> parish Church of Bromyard in y<sup>e</sup> County of Hereford wherein he was borne upon Monday in every weeke (being Market-day) in y<sup>e</sup> forenoon y<sup>e</sup> preacher to have tenn shillings for each sermon and y<sup>e</sup> Clarke of y<sup>e</sup> said pish to have twenty shillings p. annu. for his attendance on y<sup>e</sup> days for ever. Unto y<sup>e</sup> free Gramer Schoole of Bromyard aforesaid y<sup>e</sup> sum of twenty pounds a year for ever to bee paid unto ye Master of y<sup>e</sup> saide Schoole for his paines and better incourage 'm in y<sup>e</sup> schoole. Unto y<sup>e</sup> poore of y<sup>e</sup> said town of Bromyard y<sup>e</sup> sume of five pound a year for ever. Unto y<sup>e</sup> poore members of y<sup>e</sup> Company of Goldsmiths London twenty pounds a year for ever. Unto Christs Hospitall in London tenn pounds a year for ever five pounds thereof for y<sup>e</sup> poore children & y<sup>e</sup> other five pounds for a poore bleu coate if shall be bredd a scholler & sent to one of y<sup>e</sup> universities eather Oxford or Cambridge for his better incourage to study. Unto y<sup>e</sup> poore of y<sup>e</sup> pish of S Vedastatofostero in foster Lane London y<sup>e</sup> sume of five poun. Unto y<sup>e</sup> poore of y<sup>e</sup> pish of east Acton in y<sup>e</sup> county of Midd. above said tenn pounds a year for ever to be distributed every quarter of a year amongst y<sup>m</sup> at y<sup>e</sup> discretion of y<sup>e</sup> Churchwardens and overseers of y<sup>e</sup> poore of y<sup>e</sup> same pish for y<sup>e</sup> time being. Unto y<sup>e</sup> poore of y<sup>e</sup> pish of S. Sepulchers Without Newgate in London y<sup>e</sup> sume of five pounds a year for ever. All which guifts and legacys together with y<sup>e</sup> remains of his lands in East Acton and above said he hath left to the care and trust of y<sup>e</sup> Right Wor<sup>h</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Company of Goldsmiths London whereof he was a member to see y<sup>m</sup> faithfully p<sup>r</sup>formed according to y<sup>e</sup> true intent & meaning in his last will and testam<sup>t</sup> expressed.

He gave also to the relief of godly aged orthodox Ministers and fitt objects of charity & poor Ministers Widdows y<sup>e</sup> sume of one hundred pounds. He gave also to y<sup>e</sup> present relief of y<sup>e</sup> poore members of y<sup>e</sup> Wor<sup>h</sup> Company of Goldsmiths y<sup>e</sup> sum of twenty pounds wch said sumes of 100<sup>£</sup> & 20<sup>£</sup> last mentioned are allready paid and distributed.



The Triangle,  
East Acton Village.

Haveing thus enlarged himself to y<sup>e</sup> Glory of God and relief of y<sup>e</sup> poore He finished His owne course the 26<sup>th</sup> of February 1656, unto whose memory (as a pledge of Coniugall affection) his Lovinge Wife as above said erected this monument."

It will be remembered that it was from the Goldsmiths' Company, which holds

the Perryn Trusts, the lands of which have since been so largely built upon, that the gift of £1000 was received for the Acton County School laboratories.

In the courtyard of the Manor House there stood an old walnut tree with widely spreading limbs, and near at hand in the grounds there was a famous old chestnut. At the rear also stood the mounting block of the olden times, used when the greater portion of the thoroughfares, except a few main coach roads, were little better than pack-horse ways or bridle paths.

In connection with the "old bridle paths and pack-horse ways" a letter from the late Mr. John Henry Smee, of Bedford Park, father of Councillor Miss S. M. Smee, so recently as November last, gives some interesting particulars: "One of these ways," he says, "came from the Goldhawk Road across Stamford Brook



The Elms, East Acton.

Green, along what are now the Bath Road and South Parade Bedford Park, across Acton Green and Acton Lane and close under the garden wall of Gunnersbury House, and so on to Ealing and Oxford. Many years ago the late Baron Lionel Rothschild diverted this bridle path at great cost and made the Rothschild Road in its place; but the bridle path was open as a footway across the railway line until some years ago, when, I think, it was closed altogether. It was probably originally a Roman road, and I expect was joined at Gunnersbury, before the Park was enclosed, by the old pack-horse way, which came from the Thames at Hammer-smith, along at the back of Chiswick Mall, past the old Chiswick Manor House, and Lord Burlington's Chiswick House, and so out over Turnham Green past the



'Old Pack-Horse' Inn until it joined the Stamford Brook pack-horse way at Gunnersbury. There was probably another branch of this Hammersmith pack-horse way, which came out near the 'Pack-Horse and Talbot' Inn on the Chiswick High Road. The way which ran near Chiswick House, across what is now the Duke's Avenue, was diverted in the first half of last century by the Earl of Burlington; but footpaths from the river side of Hammersmith, and so on to Turnham Green, still mark its course."

Probably the footway from East Acton across the church fields to St. Mary's Church, already referred to, was at one time a bridle path.

The "Daily Chronicle," referring to the death of Mr. Smee, which took place at his residence Bedford Park on the 2nd February 1912 says, he was "for many



View of the Elms from the Garden.

years a valued contributor to the Press. He was born in Finsbury on March 18th, 1832, and throughout his life was always deeply interested in matters connected with the City of London, more especially of an antiquarian nature. He served as a Special Constable during the Chartist riots in the City, and afterwards for many years lived at Epping. Mr. Smee became a liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Dyers (one of the three companies privileged to keep swans on the Thames) in 1853. He had made a special study of banking and financial matters, and wrote on them with authority."

At the entrance to the little hamlet of East Acton there is a triangular grass plot, at the head of a wide avenue which resembles an extended village green, and

has on either side a number of substantial residences, still giving evidence of the favour in which this part of Acton once stood. At the head of this avenue and plot of green there is still a large old-fashioned house with dormer windows, called "Elm House," having enclosed courtyard in front and large garden in the rear. Nearly opposite are the Church School-house built in 1870 and Master's house, and Parish rooms near by; and across the street there stood until quite recently a quaint old smithy.



Old East Acton Village "Smithy" (now pulled down).

At this village smithy the children from the neighbouring school often had a "look in at the open door," and it formed a picturesque feature with its old tiled roof under the shadow of the great elms.

Further down the long avenue as already mentioned the road is bordered with houses of some old residents. One of the first of these is Hindley House, where formerly lived the grandfather of the Rev. W. P. Hindley, M.A., lately Vicar of



East Acton School and Master's House.



Golf Club House, East Acton.

All Saints. Only half of the original house remains, the other half having been demolished in connection with the projected Latimer Road and Acton Railway, afterwards abandoned. A little farther on is the residence of the Ouvry family, long connected with East Acton and interested in the improvement of the town. On the same side

of the green stands the East Acton Golf Club House.

At the lower end of this broad avenue, the road turned into a narrow lane, and on its way to the old hamlets of Holsdon and Wilsdon, passed near to the once-celebrated Acton Wells.

One or two farm houses were on this road, and were once famous for their piggeries. Doubtless on the adjacent Old Oak Common in times past acorns were plentiful, and in the "Wormer Wood" (Wormwood Scrubbs) shown on Rocque's map, were found other feeding grounds. Under public health Acts the keeping of swine in Acton has been prohibited.

This district is soon destined to see very great alterations, as some fifty acres immediately adjoining have been acquired by the County of London for the pur-



View from East Acton.

Wormwood Scrubbs Prison in the distance.



pose of erecting dwellings, some of which have already been put up ; while immediately to the north and to the south-east large building developments are taking place.

The view towards London from East Acton has for a long period looked over a broad space of open country, with here and there a solitary tree, rugged specimens, and obstinate contestants with wind, fog and smoke. Beyond rise up the many windowed, forbidding walls of the Wormwood Scrubbs Prison, an imposing pile, standing, however, a sufficient distance away, and well removed from all other buildings. Beside it are the Wormwood Scrubbs Common and westward Old Oak



East Acton in 1810, showing Hindley House on the left.

Common open grounds, which afford an excellent air space in this district. The Old Oak Common was evidently lost to the public through neglect in exercising the right to use it. To the south of this, and between Wormwood Scrubbs and Uxbridge Road, a large estate is now being opened up for building purposes, and in a few years one hundred acres or more of houses will probably be found occupying what have been up to the present meadows, agricultural lands, allotments, and brick-making fields.

Of the older residents of East Acton village the Ouvry family is still represented. Their long association with the religious and philanthropic work of the place makes



Old Gabled House and the Bull's Head Inn in the summer of 1820, taken down in November of that year.



The Pond opposite The Grange, East Acton (filled up a few years ago).

some reference needful. This family was connected by marriage with that of John Henry Delamain, of the War Office, who lived part of the year in a house on the site of East Acton House. In 1800 his daughter mentions that the house was very much out of repair; and soon after it was sold to John North, Esq., who pulled it down and rebuilt it. Mary, the youngest daughter of J. H. Delamain, was married to Mr. John North, 1st August, 1815, and after her husband's death in 1818 she bought the old gabled house of Mrs. Hemmings, which was much out of repair, and the site of the Bull's Head Inn, which had just been taken down, and on the two sites she built a new house, now known as White House. It is noted that she dined in her new house for the first time on the day of the Coronation of King George the Fourth. She died in the year 1858.

Another branch of the Delamain family lived for a time at "Hindley House," and were succeeded before 1820 by Mr. J. C. D. Engleheart, who was a nephew of George Engleheart, the celebrated miniature painter, whose portraits on ivory and enamel were in repute at the end of the eighteenth century,



The residence of the Ouvry family.

and who was appointed miniature painter to the King in 1790. It was the eldest daughter and third child of John Henry Delamain, Sarah Amelia, who was married to Peter Aimé Ouvry, and lived at Abingdon Street and East Acton. His father, Peter Ouvry, who married Francisca Garnault, had bought the Ouvry family residence at East Acton in 1797 from Thomas Grantham, with

three cottages adjoining, since pulled down. He had however previously held the house for some time on lease. This Peter Ouvry was the great-grandfather of the present living members of the family. His son, P. A. Ouvry, had an appointment as Under Secretary at the Ordnance Office at the Tower, and only came to East Acton for part of the year until he retired. He died at East Acton 29th May 1830, and was buried in the Acton Churchyard. After his death his widow moved to London, and the house was let successively to Mr. Clay, Captain Burnett, and Mr. C. Bruyère, until the year 1885. In that year the Rev. Peter Thomas Ouvry, Vicar of Wing, Buckinghamshire, who was the eldest son of P. A. Ouvry, retired to East Acton, where he lived until his death in June, 1891. His interment took place at Wing. Mr. John Delahaze Ouvry, his son, now owns both the family residence and the White House. The former is occupied by his sisters, Miss Francisca and Miss Ethel Ouvry. The other members of the Rev. Ouvry's family were Colonel Henry Aimé Ouvry, C.B., who died in 1899; Frederick, sometime President of the





Acton Wells "Signal Box" and old Farm House (now demolished).

Society of Antiquaries; John, who lived at the White House, and was Rural Dean of Ealing; Francisca, of the White House until 1876, in whose memory the St. Mary's Church tower was rebuilt by her brothers and sisters; and Sarah Mary, widow of Dr. Sibson, of Brook Street. She lived at the White House from 1876 until her death in 1898. In the old correspondence of the family over the signature of Mary North on the 25th August, 1837, there is the following interesting reference to a visit of the young Queen Victoria a couple of months after she came to the throne:—"On the Saturday evening, just as the Outrams and Henry were in the carriage going off to town and I going on to Hanwell, we saw an open carriage and four with outriders coming into the village [East Acton]. We knew immediately it was our young Queen. The gentlemen took off their hats and she bowed most graciously. She went up to the common and we all waited her return. All the village was out to see her; she looked very well." On the 6th of July 1818, there is a further note from the same pen: "We dined a few days ago at Mr. Graves', who lives at the large house [Manor House], at the entrance of the village where Mrs. Hemmings used to live."



"The Friar's," Acton.

Referring again to the Engleheart family, in a letter to the writer, Sir J. Gardner Dillman Engleheart, K.C.B., says:—"I lived at East Acton as a boy with my father at a house called the "Reddings," and I am the great nephew, of George Engleheart the miniaturist who died in 1828, not 1839." It will be remembered that in 1859 Sir J. Gardner D. Engleheart accompanied the late King Edward on his visit to Canada, acting as private secretary to the Duke of Newcastle; was comptroller of the household of Prince and Princess Christian; and became clerk and afterwards member of the council of the Duchy of Lancaster.

Another of the old mansions, which was uninhabited except by a caretaker for many years, "The Friars," is situated upon high ground, directly to the north of Acton, and formerly commanded a view to the east over Wormwood Scrubbs to Notting Hill, and northward to Willesden and Hampstead. This old mansion, now acquired by the District Council, and used as the administration building of the isolation hospital, although it derives its name from, is not identical with the "Friar's Place," which was quite near, and was originally called "Prior's (or Pryor's) Place." It is believed that there were two religious houses originally at Acton—those at the "Priory" and the "Friar's Place"—and that the latter was attached to St. Bartholomew's Priory, Smithfield. This old house many will recollect, although no trace of it now remains. The writer has come into possession of no



From an Old Sketch of Acton Wells.

confirmation of the association of the names of Richard Cromwell and Izack Walton referred to in the following extract from the "Guild Record" of 1894:—

"At the commencement of the present century there remained, we are told, vestiges of several moated houses; but nearly all of them have disappeared. There are still, however, one or two mansions of this character, which serve to forcibly remind us of and to bring us in touch with the past. One of them is the old farm house—Friar's Place Farm—on the way to Willesden. The old Manor House hard by, which, sad to say, has recently been demolished, was also a mansion of this type. Here, it is said, lived Richard Cromwell, son of the great Lord Protector of England, but this statement it has been impossible to verify. It is believed however, that Oliver Cromwell himself stayed in Acton on more than one occasion, and it is highly probable that the tradition of Richard Cromwell's

residence at this particular house is to be traced to this fact. There is little reason to doubt that Izack Walton, the father of all anglers, and author of "The Compleat Angler" lived at Acton, and it is thought by many people that the house in which Richard Cromwell is supposed to have made his residence for a brief period, was also the home of the immortal Izack."

Amongst those who lived at "Friars' Place" were Mr. Tubbs, Mr. Allison, Mr. Wood (who died here in 1868), Mrs. Pitts and Mr. Emanuel; while at "The Friars" lived Mr. C. B. Curtis, of the firm of Curtis and Harvey, owners of the powder mills at Hounslow, Dr. Nesbitt, who had his asylum here, and Mr. J. B. Bonnin, who was one of the later residents.



"Wales" Farm House, Acton.

Immediately after passing the "Friars," on the road from North Acton, one comes to the place which once gave great celebrity to Acton. The old sketch reproduced cannot be located as to date or position; doubtless all of these buildings have long since vanished.

Many scenes of gaiety took place in this neighbourhood, in the "good old times" when George III. was King, when Acton is reputed to have had its most rosy days, having acquired the reputation of a fashionable health resort."

J. Norris Brewer (1799-1829) says:—"In the north of the London Road is a small assemblage of houses, within this parish termed East Acton. This hamlet is scarcely one quarter of a mile from the high thoroughfare, yet, as to acquirement of



rural character it would appear to be very far distant from any populous town. There are many respectable dwellings situated in this part of Acton, and within the distance of one mile from the village, are three wells of mineral water which once possessed a fashionable name, and attracted to the neighbourhood many of the sick and of the gay. 'The water is impregnated principally with calcareous glauber, and is supposed to be more powerfully cathartic than any other in the kingdom of the same quality except that of Cheltenham. The quantity of salts in a pound weight avoirdupois of the Acton Water is 44 grains.' We have already found occasion to notice the transitory nature of the celebrity obtained by medicinal springs. Acton had its share in the day of fashion. An assembly room was built, and for a few years towards the middle of the 18th century, East Acton and Friars' Place (a small adjacent hamlet) were thronged with valetudinarian and idle immates, allured by the hope of remedy, or tempted by the love of dissipation. Both classes have long since abandoned the spot. The Assembly House was, many years back, converted into a private dwelling, and is now occupied as a boarding school of a very respectable character."

Lysons writing a little earlier (1795) notes that the place had been a very fashionable resort, East Acton and the hamlet of Friars' Place being filled with persons of all ranks, who came to reside there during the summer season. If we are to believe the advertisements appearing in the newspapers of this olden time (some specimens of which are accessible in the British Museum and the Guildhall Libraries) the medical profession freely ordered their wealthy patients to Acton. One reason for this was doubtless the fine quality of the mineral springs then open here.

"Perhaps also" said Mr. Councillor Crane in an interesting article on Old Acton "the doctors of 1750 were influenced in their opinion of the health-giving properties of Acton by the longevity of many of its inhabitants. Certain it is that the place in those days boasted of some fine old men and women. We are indebted for copies of the following advertisements to the compiler of a unique collection in the Guildhall Library: 'July 3rd, 1771, by the request of several physicians, and by the encouragement of several of the nobility and gentry, Acton Wells are newly opened for the benefit of the public, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from Lady Day to Michaelmas. Every subscriber for a whole family is to pay one guinea per annum, and every single subscriber half-guinea, for which they are to have the use of the new room, and the water either on the spot or at home. Non-subscribers to pay 1s. each for waters and salts, and moreover subscribers as well as non-subscribers to pay 8d. each for their breakfasts. N.B.—The public house adjoining the wells, with good stabling, is now open with proper accommodation, and on timely notice, dinners provided.'

The owner of the adjoining public house, a certain Mr. Gardner, doubtless made much money in those palmy days of Acton, for many advertisements afterwards appeared announcing events and seasons in connection with his hostelry. On August 3rd, 1771, for instance, his advertisement states: 'Mr. Gardner takes this opportunity to acquaint the nobility and gentry who have honoured him with their subscriptions, that there will be a particular public breakfasting on Monday, 5th August.'

The last record to be given is from James Thorne, writing in the year 1876:—"The Wells are in the garden, and what remains of the Wells house now forms part of the outbuildings of a farmhouse, which stands on the Western side of the Gt. Western Railway. On the adjacent portion of Old Oak Common was formed in 1870 the so called People's Garden, now held by the German Club, Foley Street,



The late "Park Royal" Agricultural Show Station and Buildings.

London, and transformed into a veritable summer 'Biergarten,' with the biggest dancing platform in this country, and where German is chiefly spoken."

This also has long since ceased to exist, and at the present time nothing remains to be seen of the once fashionable resort and celebrated springs. The name of the old vine-covered house known as "Wales" farm is doubtless a corruption from "Wells Farm." Although once a picturesque and pleasant spot, it has lost its former attractiveness.

Before leaving these old haunts of the North of Acton, reference may be made to one more event: the establishment in 1901-2 at Park Royal, Acton, of what was intended to be the permanent show grounds of the Royal Agricultural Society. The position was an excellent one, situated on slightly rising ground, with ample

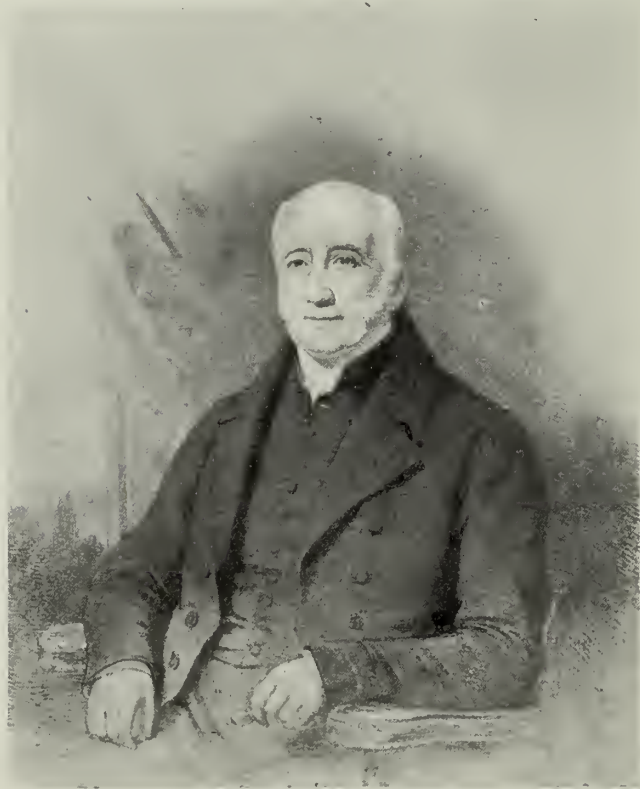


The late "Park Royal" Agricultural Show Grounds, Acton.

space, railway communication sidings, etc., and it was remarkable that it had not better attendances during the years in which it was held here. The greater number of visitors attending it were from the country, and London completely failing to make it a popular resort, the Society, after repeated trials, closed the grounds and sold the land for building purposes.

Mr. G. H. Monson, referring to an old map of Acton in 1805, writes: "According to this map Acton then comprised three distinct villages or

hamlets, viz., 'Town Acton' (round about the church, also on some of the old maps marked 'Church Acton'); 'East Acton'; and 'Acton Green.' Sir Henry Featherstonhaugh, Bart. (whose father married the heiress of the Lethieulliers, and through whom he no doubt acquired the estate) is shewn as the owner of quite one-third of the parish, his estate including all lands from about where Rosemont and Creffield Roads now are, northward right away to Willesden, to the west (roughly speaking) of Horn Lane and Willesden Lane, as well as what we now know as the Avenue and Mill Hill Park. Practically the whole of the rest of the land in the north of the parish is shewn as belonging to Messrs. R. Tubbs, senior and junior, and Old Oak Common district to Mr. Thomas Church. 'The Elms' and a good deal of the western part of the parish to Mr. G. S. Wegg, whilst the rest of the parish (with the exception of a few small owners) was comprised in the



Rev. William Antrobus, B.D.

four great common fields of Acton, which were called the 'Eastfield,' the 'Southfield,' the 'Churchfield,' and the 'Turnham Field.'

The Tubbs family appear to have been landowners also at Harlesden, where a road near the Willesden Junction is called Tubbs Road. In the churchyard of St. Mary's is a tomb bearing inscriptions in memory of a number of members of the family, including that of Robert Tubbs, of Harlesden, who died 30th May, 1782, aged 77, and his son Robert, of Friar's Place, who died 12th May, 1810, also aged 77 years.



In "Pigot's London and Provincial Directory" for 1826-7, there is given a description of Acton and a list of some of the residents of note at that time. It runs as follows: "The small town of Acton is pleasantly situated on the declivity of a gentle sloping eminence about 5 miles from the metropolis: it is a considerable thoroughfare on the great Oxford Road which greatly enlivens it, and is also of considerable advantage to the town. Acton consists of one long street with some tolerably good houses: it is governed by a chief magistrate, two head boroughs, one constable, two ale conners, and an inspector of weights and measures. The church is a large plain edifice with a tower containing 6 bells and a clock. The Rev. Wm. Antrobus is the present Rector. Here is also a neat chapel belonging



"Springfield," Acton.

to the Independents. Several highly respectable academies of youth of both sexes are established in or near the town, and the environs are embellished with a variety of neat and elegant mansions, the residences of persons of respectability.

The village of East Acton is agreeably situated about a mile and a half from Acton, contiguous to the Uxbridge Road where are also many highly respectable residences, and from the beauty of the situation few places are better adapted for a summer retreat, the scenery being beautifully picturesque and rural. Here is also an inn with excellent accommodation. The population of Acton Parish from the

last returns was 961 males and 968 females consisting of 356 families and 326 inhabited houses.

Post Office, Acton, within the limits of the London twopenny post district:— Receiving House at Thomas Collet and Sons, Grocers. Letters dispatched every morning at half past 8 and in the afternoon at half past 3, and arrive at Acton at 9 in the evening. East Acton—John Kemp, Postmaster. The mail arrives at 12 at noon and is dispatched at 8 in the morning and 3 in the afternoon.”

The following is the List of “Gentry and Clergy” :—

Adair, Robt., Esq., Bank House.  
Antrobus, Rev. W., Rector.  
Bell, Mrs., Acton Priory.  
Davies, Jno., Esq., East Acton.  
Dex, Thos., Esq., East Acton (Attorney).  
Dolman, Edwd., Esq., East Acton.  
Gaidner, Mrs., East Acton.  
Graves, Chas., Esq., East Acton.  
Graves, Jas., Esq., Manor House.  
Harvey, Wm., Esq., Acton.

(A Mrs. Harvey is shewn in the 1805 Map as owner or occupier of land in Horn Lane about where Nemours Road now is.)

Heath, Jas., Esq., East Acton.  
Houseman, Jno., Esq., East Acton.  
Inglehart, J., Esq., East Acton.  
Jennings, Miss Ann, East Acton.  
Kelly, Peter, Esq., Acton House.

Mansfield, T., Esq., Frogmore Place.  
North, Mrs., East Acton.  
Ouvry, Peter, East Acton.  
Owen, Saml., Esq., Acton Bottom.  
Peil, Mrs., Acton Cottage.  
Selby, Nicholas T., Esq., Acton (Derwent-water House).  
Stockdale, Jos., Esq., Winter Lodge.  
Toosey, Jas., Esq., East Acton.  
Tyler, Geo., Esq., Hill House.  
Warren, Dr., East Acton.  
Wegg, Mrs. ‘Eliz.’ Acton (The Elms).  
Winter, Jno., Esq., Heathfield Lodge (shown in 1805 Map).  
Wood, — Esq., Friars Place.  
Also  
Day, Henry, Surgeon.  
Palmer, Saml. J., Steyne Mills.

The reference to the receiving house for letters gives the name of Collet and Sons. In the year 1810 the 4th bell of the peal in the parish church tower was re-cast. It bears the inscription “Harris and Collett, Churchwardens, 1810,” and Mr. G. H. Monson adds: “The name of Collett was a household word in the early part of the 19th century. Questions have been raised at different times and even recently as to the common right of Old Oak Common.” Writing of the year 1842, Mr. Monson says: “Somewhere about this time questions arose as to the parish boundaries and common rights at Old Oak Common, no doubt largely due to the disturbances of the old landmarks caused by the construction of the canal and railway works in that district and a public enquiry was held, the result of which was largely in favour of the landowners in this part of the parish.

Leaving Twyford and the extreme northern boundary of the parish for later reference, and returning by Horn Lane, it is said this road derives its name from the great quantity of deer horns that were dug up when the road was originally made. Following as it does for some distance the course of the upper portion of the Stamford Brook, the banks of this stream may have afforded convenient spots for the early inhabitants or huntsmen feasting upon their venison. On Rocques Map is shewn a house evidently of considerable size which appeared in 1745 to have been upon the land shown on the 1805 Map as Mrs. Harvey’s.

The “Lodge,” where lived Mr. Scott Turner and later Mr. Asplan Beldam, and “Shalimar,” once occupied, says Mr. Monson, by “Major Rickards and his daughters, Mr. Treherne and Mrs. Treadaway,” and last of all by Mrs. Pierce’s School, have been demolished. There still stands, however, though much altered,

"Springfield" the old house which has figured in romance and story, and was the principal scene of Mrs. Mary E. Shipley's book, "Granny's Heroes, a tale of old Acton." It was almost entirely enveloped in a profuse growth of evergreens. It was long the residence of the late Dr. Lingham. Creepers threaded round its windows and doorway, a stately cedar grew in front, and the murmuring Stamford brook flowed and rippled just at the bottom of the front garden—all frequently



An Acton "Patriarch," formerly in the Meadow adjoining  
Twyford Avenue, drawn and etched by W. T. Davey.

referred to in Mrs. Shipley's story. The little window she mentions that looked into the attic, was almost hidden by the creepers, and was scarcely to be discerned below the middle stack of chimneys at the top of the house. This property has recently been acquired and renovated by F. A. Baldwin, Esq.

Dr. Lingham, who, when he was a young man, travelled with the late Mr. Heald, was for many years one of the leading public men of Acton, and was





The "Woodlands" on Acton Hill.

John Deed and J. C. Gee, Lapland Wool Rug, Boot and Slipper Manufacturers, and previously of Mr. S. J. Palmer and Messrs. J. C. Gee & Co. The extensive laundry works of ex-Councillor F. A. Baldwin are now situated at this spot, and give work to a large number of employees.

At a short distance across the High Street on the site of the fine row of shops now on the southern side and facing the slope of Acton Hill once stood the old mansion known as the "Woodlands," behind which were beautiful grounds with a choice collection of fine old trees. Judging by the variety and the many fine specimens, they were evidently selected with care hundreds of years ago, and were probably the best that Acton possessed; and it is matter of satisfaction that only a part of them have had to be taken down. The house, which was occupied by Messrs. Hooper, Mansel (the first Chairman of the Local Board and Secretary and General Manager of the North London Railway), Barton-Kent, and Walker, has entirely disappeared, and the gardens and grounds, with those of the "Oaks" adjoining, have been dedicated to the public,—the greater part for the County School playgrounds, and the remainder as a public garden for the town. The "Oaks" stood next higher up the hill, and the house has shared the same fate. Mr. Lapraik and Mr. Rose were amongst its occupants. It stood until a few years ago on the site where the new Wesleyan Methodist Church has been erected. To some of the other old houses once in this neighbourhood

Chairman of the Local Board from 1883 to 1886. The 'Steyne,' with its cluster of old cottages overlooked formerly by Bank House (of which no trace is left save a bit of brick wall in a back yard), and by Derwentwater House, now entirely demolished, is perhaps as already suggested, one of the links with Roman times; and Mr. Montagu Sharpe's interesting map of the "vestiges of Romano-British occupation" of Middlesex, tracing the name to a Roman stone, also suggests that Harlesden is of like derivation, 'Herulvestone.' Near the Steyne, which has been re-built in recent years, and which had its bit of waste or green enclosed and planted with shrubs in 1906, were in former times the mills of



The "Woodlands" from the Garden.



The Oaks, Acton Hill.

reference is made in the following from the "Suburban Homes of London":—  
 "From Church Road is old commercial Acton, which ends at the George and Dragon, Acton Hill, where nearly opposite to each other are the Baptist and Wesleyan Chapels, Hill House, the Elms (C. O. Ledward, Esq.), and then the Fishponds, opposite to which the East Lodge (G. S. Hinchcliffe, Esq.) and West Lodge (W. Roebuck, Esq.), then Ealing parish begins."

Two names call for fuller notice. They are those of Samuel and George Samuel Wegg. In the "Ambulator" of 1796 the former is referred to as the owner of "a modern mansion, called the Bank House," standing on the site of the house where "resided Francis, Lord Rous, one of Cromwell's Peers." It appears from the "Gentleman's Magazine" for 1802 that his death took place at the above named modern mansion, in regard to which house Mr. Francis Draper in an interesting article in the "Middlesex County Times" of 19 May, 1900, says: "In 1863, when the writer first lived in Acton, it was still occupied as a residence." The notice of Samuel Wegg's death is as follows:—

"December 19th, at his house at Acton, in his eightieth year, Samuel Wegg, Esq., F.R.S. and A.S.S., treasurer of the former society thirty four years, and till the anniversary immediately preceding his death; late Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company (an appointment he held from 1783 till lately when he resigned it on account of his advanced age); Senior Benchler of the Hon. Society of Gray's Inn; and in the Commission of the Peace for the Counties of Middlesex and Essex. He had been a Chamber Counsel of Lincoln's Inn, and a prothonotary of the Court of Common Pleas, but possessing a good property of his own, and by marriage, declined public business. Mrs. Wegg died March 15th, 1799, by whom he had a son and two daughters, the youngest of whom married Dr. Prosser, rector of Gateshead, co. Durham, 1796."

Further interesting facts of this family appear later. Their name was given to Wegg Avenue, and in "Middlesex Charities," by Henry Gray, appears:—

"Charities of Mrs. Elizabeth Wegg, Samuel Wegg, Esq., and George Samuel Wegg, Esq.—Mrs. Elizabeth Wegg gave by Will in 1799, £100 and Samuel Wegg, Esq., also by Will in 1802, £100, 3 % consols, to which their son, the late George Samuel Wegg, Esq., in the year last mentioned added so much as purchased £300 consols, the dividends of which were directed by the donors to be disposed of to the poor of the parish of Acton at the discretion of the Rector. The stock stands in the names of George Samuel Wegg, Elizabeth Wegg, and Rev. William Antrobus. Mr. Antrobus, the Rector, receives the dividends, being £9 a year, which he applies to the relief of the poor of the parish in cases of emergency, as he sees occasion."

On August 11th, 1857, an order of the Charity Commissioners was made "that the sums of £741. 6. 2. and £438. 3. 4. consols, bequeathed by Mrs. Elizabeth, Miss Elizabeth, Samuel and George Wegg, be transferred to the official trustees of charitable funds, pursuant to the provisions of the Charitable Trusts Acts, of 1855."

There seems to have been an earlier George Wegg, "a wealthy alderman and merchant taylor," said to have been allied to Charles Gray, who "was attorney to the Tendering Hundred Commissioners in 1723," and who "a few years later married Sara, widow of Rali Creffield, and daughter of John Webster and Mary (Kersteman), whose grandfather had been a wealthy merchant and deacon of the Dutch Church in Austin Friar's in 1666." Besides this alliance of George Wegg's are mentioned "his connections with the Tayspils, Creffields, and other rich local families." These connections are probably commemorated in our present Creffield Road.

From a printed paper giving "Some particulars of the life and death of George Samuel Wegg, Esq.," we learn that he was of Acton, but was born in the Parish of St. George Bloomsbury, in the year 1749 and died at Acton on 21st January,

1817, aged 67. After passing through the usual course of academical education at Christ's College, Cambridge, he was "called to the Bar," and became, and continued, until his death, a Bencher of the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn."

The paper which is by "Amicus" continues:—

"He was a truly loyal subject, and firmly attached to the existing constitution both in Church and State. An honest, an impartial magistrate, fair and upright in all his dealings, and uniformly scrupulous in a rigid adherence to truth, and justice, both in principle and practice, an exemplary in a strict but unostentatious performance of all religious duties, public and private. A zealous promotor of



Lord Chief Justice Vaughan.



charitable institutions, as well by the liberality of his contributions as by his personal assistance. Of his private charities little more is known than that they were numerous and extensive. He was a kind and indulgent master, a candid, conciliating, benevolent, and hospitable neighbour, a most affectionate brother and a sincere friend. The blessed effect of a life so spent, most happily and peculiarly exemplified its termination. In the midst of health apparently unbroken, and with scarce any perceptible symptoms of the internal disease which soon proved fatal, he received the unexpected information of his immediate danger with a calm

composure which nothing but a constant state of preparation for the last awful change could ever have inspired, and waited for his approaching dissolution with a tranquility and resignation truly Christian, recollecting with humility, but with comfort, his uniform endeavours to discharge his duty, and expressing a confident hope that through the merits of His Redeemer he may be finally accepted at the Throne of Grace. After the short interval of three days, exempt from pain both of body and mind, he resigned his breath without a pang or struggle, as if he was sinking into repose of sleep; thus terminated a life which every man should try to live, by a death which every man would wish to die."

In connection with this family the following extract from Brewer (1816) is of interest:—

"At the western end of the village are the commodious respectable brick villas of S. Wegg, Esq., and Mrs. Way. There are vestiges of several moated houses in the neigh-

Wegg Avenue (now Twyford Avenue), Acton.  
Photo: Austin.

bourhood, and Acton enumerates some former residents of considerable enimence," and after reference to Francis Rous, Provost of Eton, he continues:—"On the site of the building which he occupied is erected a modern house, now the residence of Mrs. Payne. This dwelling is placed on a spot artificially elevated from which circumstance it is termed the 'Bankhouse,' and is near the centre of the town. Lord Chief Justice Vaughan was an inhabitant of Acton, 1673." He is described as a steadfast though decidedly moderate Royalist, who "made an



ingenious but unsuccessful attempt to enervate by amendment the new test imposed on Dissenting Ministers"—that is he opposed the Five Mile Act, by which the oppression of the deprived Ministers of 1662 was grievously increased. A man of high principle and moderation he also endeavoured to protect the deprived Ministers. Selden made him Co-legatee with Sir Matthew Hale of his library. In recognition of his services in connection with the settlement of cases between owners and occupiers who had suffered by the ravages of the great fire of London, the Corporation had his portrait painted and placed in the Guildhall. He acted as Speaker of the House of Lords in the absence of the Lord-Keeper during part of 1669 and 1670.

Mr. G. H. Monson writes:—

"It is not generally known that the carved heads on the springing stones of the arch of the West Entrance of St. Mary's Church are copied from old portraits of Sir Matthew Hale and Richard Baxter.

Acton seems to have been a rather favoured spot as a place of residence of distinguished lawyers about this time. Besides Sir Matthew Hale we find that Sir John Vaughan, his successor in 1668 (as Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas) died at Acton on the 10th December, 1674. His actual place of residence here is uncertain, but his name (says Lysons) occurs in the Churchwarden's accounts.

This celebrated judge is famous for having abolished the pernicious practice by which jurors were fined if they gave a verdict contrary to the dictation of a judge. In the year 1670 the Recorder of London set a fine of 40 marks upon each of the jury who had acquitted the Quakers Penn and Mead on an indictment for an unlawful assembly. Bushell, the foreman, refused to pay and being committed to prison obtained a Writ of Habeas Corpus from the Court of Common Pleas: on the return made that he had been committed for finding a verdict against full and manifest evidence and against the direction of the Court, Chief Justice Vaughan held the ground to be insufficient and discharged the prisoner."

We owe the liberty and purity of trial by jury to the firm stand taken by these men in this celebrated trial when they were threatened, abused, locked up two nights after bringing in their verdict, and kept without food. Every possible effort was made by the Recorder and court to coerce and force them to bring in a verdict contrary to the truth and their conscience, but all in vain, for, as we have seen, their cause was eventually established. Of other early residents the Rev. Prebendary Harvey wrote from the Acton Rectory in 1882: "Early in the eighteenth century Colonel J. Cunningham, who served in all Queen Anne's wars, and who consequently served probably under Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, and helped to win the victories of Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde and Malplaquet, had a seat at Acton. He is said to have resided at the Priory during his later years. He died at the age of 83 at Acton on the 13th August, 1774. His tombstone, which according to Lysons, was in the south aisle of the old church, confirms that he was under Marlborough.

Rev. Prebendary Harvey also wrote:—

"It may interest some of our readers to know that the convenient Rectory House of our village was built about the year 1725. It no doubt took the place of the ancient and dilapidated building, which, as we have seen, had witnessed so many changes and chances and so many stirring scenes. The new Rectory House was built by a rector named Hall, but he, poor man did not live to enjoy this enduring result of his labours; and this led his successor, the witty Dr. Cobden,

on taking possession of the new house, to write with a diamond ring on one of the window panes, some brief and well turned Latin verses, in which he pointed to Hall's building that he never lived to enjoy, as an illustration of the vanity of all human projects.

In 1749 Acton was chosen as being one of the most healthy neighbourhoods round London, for the erection of new Clergy Orphan Schools, but they were afterwards removed to St. John's Wood.

And now the heavy carriage of Lord Mayor Gascoyne might be constantly seen rolling up and down between Acton and London—for Alderman Gascoyne

lived in our parish, apparently at Fairlawn, Acton Green. One day in the year 1760 the quiet little village of Acton was suddenly all enquiry and excitement, and the cause was this—an empty carriage drawn by six horses, coming from the direction of London, was brought to a standstill in the High Street. This carriage, it turned out, had belonged to the Earl Ferrers, who having murdered his steward, had been permitted to drive himself to Tyburn Gate, close to where the Marble Arch now stands, which was the usual place of execution. Nor was this the only privilege which the Earl obtained from the authorities of the day: for he also obtained leave to be hanged with a 'rope of silk,' and what was more important to the poor man—he induced the authorities to use for the first time a drop, so that the victim might not linger or have his sufferings added to by the clumsiness of the hangman. On arriving at Tyburn, the Earl, as he no longer needed his carriage and horses, caused them to be sent adrift down the Uxbridge Road,



Dr. John Lindley, F.R.S., from a painting by Ellis.

or perhaps they started away themselves in the general confusion. However this may be, the carriage was pushed into a shed at Acton and there remained for many years for the view of visitors, until it fell to pieces." Sir Crisp Gascoyne was born at Chiswick, and became Lord Mayor in 1752. He was an ancestor of the Marquis of Salisbury, his daughter and heiress marrying the second Marquis and from this union the family derives its double name Gascoyne—Cecil. He was the first Lord Mayor to occupy the present Mansion House, then just completed. "Fairlawn," Acton Green, which forty years ago was the residence of R. Attenborough, Esq., the second Chairman of the



Acton Local Board, is said to have been also the residence of Nichols the antiquary. Thorne writes: "Here also dwelt till his death, October 19th, 1863, John Bowyer Nichols, F.S.A., the well-known printer and antiquary"; but according to other writers his death took place at Ealing at the age of 84. Mr. Monson says, "It was at Hanger Vale, the house at the bottom of Hanger Hill on the east side of the road," called in Rocque's Map Till Kiln House. He was Editor and proprietor of the "Gentleman's Magazine," which also gives this information.

His son John Gough Nichols, 1806-1873, was also an antiquary, and a school-fellow with Disraeli in his childhood.

The father of J. B. Nichols and grandfather of J. G. Nichols, John Nichols, 1745-1826, the printer, chiefly of old Standard Works, and author largely of topographical literature, was a friend of Dr. Johnson and printed his "Lives of the English Poets," and was a friend of Dr. Lettson. He lived in Islington, his birthplace, with five of his daughters, where he died at Highbury Place in 1826.

One more celebrated resident for a time at "Fairlawn" was the late Dr. John Lindley the eminent horticulturist and the first Professor of Botany in the University of London; and there too it was that his son the Lord Justice, well-known at the lawcourts a few years ago, Baron Lindley, of East Carleton, Norfolk, now in his eighty-fourth year, lived with his parents in his childhood. In a letter to the writer the Right Hon. Lord Lindley says of Fairlawn:—"I remember living there very well until we removed to Bedford House." And in further reference to his father he says:—"The house in which Dr. Lindley died was the middle and largest of three houses on Acton Back Common near the north end of Turnham Green Terrace, and it was called Bedford House. It had a garden in front and a large five-barred gate opening on to the Common. Fairlawn House was on its west and Sidney House on its east. Dr. Lindley lived a short time in Fairlawn House and moved many years before he died into Bedford House." To reach the last named residence from Acton at the present time we must walk along by the side of Acton Green Common, until we approach Turnham Green Railway Station, and to our left there stands an ancient, squarely built house in its own grounds surrounded by a brick wall. This was Dr. Lindley's.

The following account of his life appeared in the "Gardener's Chronicle," November 11th, 1865, the year in which he died:—

"John Lindley was born at Catton, near Norwich, on the 5th of February, 1799, being a descendant of a good Yorkshire family. His father was a nurseryman of considerable ability, and is known to gardeners as the author of a guide to the orchard and kitchen garden.

As a boy, Lindley distinguished himself by his industry and quickness, although he had some difficulty in learning lessons by rote. At this time his inclinations led him to the study of plants and antiquities, and he is known to have spent much of his pocket money in hiring books on the latter subjects, which he read with such avidity that his school fellows bestowed on him the nickname of 'Old Antiquity.' He left school when he was about 16, and shortly afterwards went to Belgium on business for the late Mr. Wrench, of Camberwell, the well known seed merchant. After his return from Belgium he remained at home with his father for a few years, and devoted himself indefatigably to botanical, horticultural, and entomological pursuits. His first scientific acquaintance was with Sir William, then Mr. Hooker, who was 14 years older than himself. At the time of which we speak, Mr. Hooker lived at Norwich, and was in the habit of visiting Lindley at Catton to procure plants and insects. The acquaintance was continued after Mr. Hooker's removal to Halesworth. It was at this latter place that Lindley

made a translation of Richards' 'Analyse du Fruit,' setting himself to his task with so much devotion that he completed it at a single sitting, having worked at it for three days and two nights without intermission. This translation was published in 1819.

The same year he proceeded to London, where he was employed by Sir Joseph Banks as his assistant librarian. In 1822 Lindley became Garden Assistant Secretary to the Horticultural Society, of which Mr. Sabine was then Honorary Secretary. At this time the garden in Chiswick was in process of formation, partly under Lindley's superintendence. This duty he performed with his usual ardour,

rising early and summoning to their work those less active than himself, in order that the orchard might be planted before winter. In 1826 he was appointed sole Assistant Secretary to the Horticultural Society, having duties to perform both in London and at Chiswick. From this time he may be said to have become the mainspring of the Society, upon which depended its efficient working as it advanced in prosperity, requiring his daily attendance during office hours in Regent Street, or once a week at the Garden, besides frequent extra work in the early morning. In 1830, at the time of Mr. Sabine's resignation, owing to over-sanguine expectations and untoward circumstances, with which, however, Dr. Lindley had been entirely unconnected, the Society had got into difficulties, which taxed his energies and attention to the utmost to overcome. In conjunction with Mr. Bentham, who had succeeded Mr. Sabine as Honorary Secretary, he worked out a plan for holding at the Garden general exhibitions of flowers and fruit in lieu of the old expensive fêtes which, although tried again in 1831 under the most



The Right Hon. Lord Lindley.

Photo:

Messrs. Elliott & Fry.

favourable circumstances, failed completely in promoting the objects or the resources of the Society.

His connection with University College began in the year 1829, and he continued to lecture in that Institution until 1861, when he resigned. Upon his resignation he was made emeritus Professor, at the instance of Professor de Morgan, and was subsequently appointed to the office of Examiner of Botany in the University of London from 1861 to 1863. He devoted great care and attention to his lectures, making large rough drawings for their illustration. For many years

his class was very large, but as the number of botanical lecturers (many of whom had been his pupils) increased, his class fell off in numbers. Dr. Lindley never read a lecture, but he invariably prepared notes, and paid great attention to the arrangement of his matter. His lectures were remarkable for their clearness, their conciseness, and the profuseness with which they were illustrated. Among his early pupils was Mr. Griffith, the well known Indian botanist, for whom Dr. Lindley always expressed the highest admiration. The lectures at Chelsea were of a less formal character; but eminently practical. Their value has been attested by large numbers of medical men, both abroad and at home. They were discontinued in 1853. Dr. Lindley also occasionally lectured at the Royal and other scientific institutions in London. It was mainly for the use of his classes that he published several of his best known botanical works, but his two great general works, the 'Vegetable Kingdom' and the 'Theory of Horticulture,' were the results of long continued labour bestowed on the collecting and digesting a vast store of materials.

Many of the books we have mentioned, and these are not all that were produced by his busy pen, were illustrated either by his own skilful pencil, or by that of his two daughters.

Not content with the labours to which we have already referred, Dr. Lindley and other gentlemen, including the late Sir Joseph Paxton, determined in 1841 to supply a long-felt want in the shape of a first-class horticultural journal, and the 'Gardener's Chronicle' accordingly made its appearance.

He was a steady advocate of the improved education of gardeners, seeing in that a powerful remedy for the grievances under which many of them labour. Nor did his interest in them cease here. Dr. Lindley was a staunch supporter of the Gardeners' Royal Benevolent Institution, and rendered great assistance to that useful association both with pen and purse.

As has been stated in our notice of the life of the late Sir William Hooker, Dr. Lindley recommended that the Royal Gardens at Kew 'should be made over to the nation, and should ultimately become the headquarters of botanical science for England, its colonies and dependencies.' The nomination of Sir William Hooker to the directorate of that establishment, and the placing of the garden on its present footing, were matters in which Dr. Lindley felt the highest possible interest, and it was always a subject of gratification to him that he had been instrumental in promoting the important objects just mentioned. During the potato famine Dr. Lindley and others were commissioned by Sir Robert Peel to proceed to Ireland and report on the actual state of things there, and the Minister is well known to have been much influenced by the report of this Commission in his determination to effect the repeal of the Corn Laws. Many of our readers may also remember the long and ultimately successful battle Lindley fought in this paper for the cause of cheap glass. It may be said, indeed, that to him to a great extent belongs the credit of having placed glass houses within the reach of persons of moderate means. At the time of the Exhibition in 1862 he was induced, much against the advice of his family, to take charge of the whole colonial department, and although constantly complaining of headache, from which he had never before suffered, he refused to abandon his post, and after the Exhibition was closed it was seen that Lindley's mental and bodily powers had received an injury from the effects of which they were never to recover. He was soon compelled to resign the Secretaryship of the Horticultural Society, with which he had then been connected for forty years. It was at this time that some of his friends subscribed for a portrait of him by Mr. Eddis, and the excellent likeness now in the Society's Meeting Room, is from



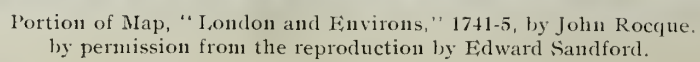
the brush of that distinguished artist. Although Dr. Lindley's family and friends were aware of his precarious state, his sudden death took them somewhat by surprise. He retired to rest as usual on Tuesday, the 31st of October. On the following morning early he was seized with a fit of apoplexy and gradually sank. He has left a widow (the daughter of Anthony Freestone, Esq., of St. Margaret's, Southeimham, Suffolk), to whom he was married in 1823, and whose devotion to him throughout life was unceasing. His three children also survive him. Dr. Lindley was of average height, with dark brown hair and ruddy complexion. He had only one serviceable eye, the other having been useless from infancy. His figure was erect, and his walk firm. He was hot

in temper and impatient of opposition, but on the other hand he had the warmest of hearts and the most generous of dispositions. His love of young children, and the sacrifices he would make for them, are instances of this. By his own family circle he was idolized, and greatly beloved by all admitted to the privilege of familiar friendship with him. To young men he was always ready to lend a helping hand. He was incapable of a mean action; and nothing roused his anger or provoked his indignation so much as any approach to jobbery or underhand schemes. He was a man of most extraordinary energy and resolution. His power of work was astonishing; whatever he undertook he did with the utmost conscientiousness, never flagging until he had done it, and he was a splendid example of what can be accomplished by a man of strong will habitually acting up to his oft repeated saying, that 'by method, zeal, and perseverance nothing was impossible.' Dr. Lindley was a member of about 60 scientific societies, including every botanical and horticultural society of note in Europe and America. He



became a Fellow of the Linnean as early as 1820 and of the Royal in 1828." The "Journal of Horticulture" of November 7th, 1865, after referring to the affection of the brain from which he suffered and to his death, says:—"Thus expired an intellect much above the common order, a sacrifice to its own untiring and unceasing toil. He was buried yesterday at the new cemetery at Acton." Lord Lindley, the distinguished son of Dr. Lindley, is one of the five Lords of Appeal created life peers; but having reached the age of seventy years when this honour was conferred he has now ceased to act in this capacity. Originally it was only possible to elevate two









Portion of Map, "London and Environs," 1741-5, by John Rocque.  
by permission from the reproduction by Edward Sandford.



Judges of Appeal into life barons; but thirty-six years ago the limitation was withdrawn. The neighbourhood in which Dr. Lindley so long resided became a favourite resort of artists of various professions. Another celebrity who came to live in Acton was Mrs. Elizabeth Barry the famous actress.

Lysons quotes from the burial register and adds the following :—

“ ‘Mrs. Elizabeth Barry was buried in the parish church of Acton, in the south oyle, under the end of Madam Lamb’s pew, being att the uper end and between the two pillers; she was buried on the 12th day of November, 1713.’ Elizabeth Barry was daughter of a gentleman of an ancient family and good estate, which was so much injured during the civil war, that his children were obliged to make their own fortunes. His daughter Elizabeth was taken under the protection of Lady Davenant, a widow lady, by whom she was recommended to Sir William Davenant, the patentee of the theatre in Lincoln’s-inn-fields; her first efforts were unsuccessful; but afterwards, by the instructions of the celebrated Earl of Rochester, she became the most eminent actress that the stage had then seen. She first distinguished herself by acting Isabella, in the tragedy of Mustapha, and was thought to excel very much in personating Queen Elizabeth, and in the character of Roxana. Mrs. Barry’s last appearance was April 8th, 1709, when she acted in the play of Love for Love (which was performed for Betterton’s benefit), and spoke the epilogue. This was three years after she had retired from the stage. The following inscription is on a marble tablet affixed to a pillar between the south aisle and the nave of Acton Church: ‘Near this place lies the body of Elizabeth Barry, of the Parish of St. Mary, Savoy, who departed this life the 7 Nov. 1713 aged 55 years.’ ”

“About the middle of the 18th century was published John Rocque’s ‘Map of London and Environs’ (1741-5). From it we find that at that time Acton Parish comprised three distinct collections of dwellings, viz.: Acton (round about the Parish Church), Acton Green, and East Acton with a few scattered buildings at ‘Fryer’s Place.’ The road connecting the latter with East Acton is called ‘Batteriges Lane,’ and a road running northward from it to Wilsden is called ‘Holsdon Green Lane.’ Newcourt (who wrote in 1708) says that Acton was called at that time West Acton, to distinguish it from East Acton; a distinction shewn in Norden’s ‘Map of Middlesex’ about the end of the 16th century.

The approach to Acton from London is shewn on Rocque’s map as ‘North High Way.’ The old time names of places still familiar will be of interest. A wide road turns off to the north at Shepherds Bush about where Wood Lane now is. This is called Turven’s Lane and leads through ‘Wormer Wood,’ which is shewn as a thick wood, to ‘Holsdon.’ A little further on (about where the Princess Victoria Tavern now stands) is a road turning off to the south, called ‘Starch Green,’ with two objects, apparently gibbets, standing at its junction with the main road. This road runs through to ‘Goggle Goose Green’ and ‘Paddingwick Green,’ where it is joined by ‘Gold Lock Lane,’ and runs to ‘Stanford Brook’ and then out on to ‘Acton Common,’ which is shewn extending southwards right up to the main road at Turnham Green. Berrymead Priory at Acton is marked ‘Duke of Kingston.’ A large house with extensive gardens is shewn where Derwentwater House used to stand. The Stamford Brook crosses the High Street at the bottom of Acton Hill as an open stream. Brentford Lane leads off at the top of the Hill to ‘Bellow Bridge,’ and on to ‘Gunnersbury House.’ ‘The Elms’ is marked ‘Sr. Joseph Ayloffe,’ and from

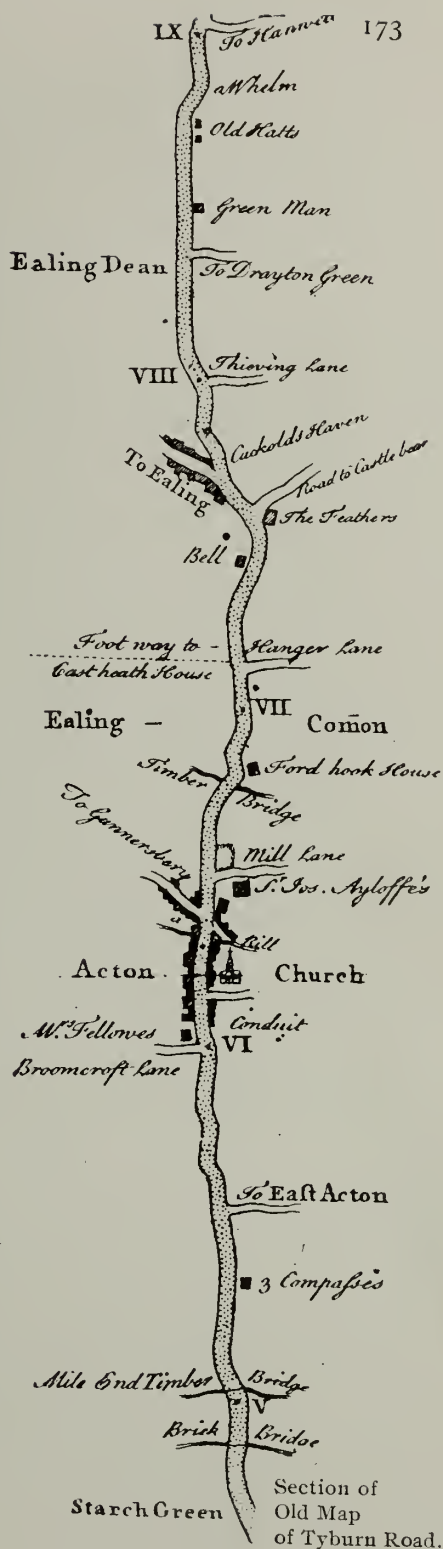
there to Ealing Common extensive roadside wastes are shewn as well as two ponds (one large and one much smaller), out of the former of which flowed the 'Bellow Brook.' The road beyond 'The Elms' is called 'Mill Lane,' and is shewn as running right through to Twyford. Sir Joseph Ayloffe, Baronet, was keeper of the State papers for many years. He died in 1781 and lies buried in Hendon Churchyard. Lysons says 'the house had been acquired by Mr. Wegg a few years before 1755.'

Another famous lawyer living in this neighbourhood was Sir John Maynard, born in 1602. He became a member of the Short Parliament in 1640, and from that time onwards took an active part in politics. He managed the impeachments of Strafford (1640) and Laud (1645). Although he was a strict constitutionalist and probably was in favour of reviving the monarchy, he accepted office under Cromwell, becoming the Protector's Sergeant. Maynard was a member of the Convention Parliament which asked Charles II. to return to England, and at his coronation took part in the ceremonies as King's Sergeant.

He acquired a large fortune, and was rich also in wives, having had four, of whom the two first were buried in Ealing Church. His only children were by his first wife, namely, one son and four daughters; but he outlived them all except his youngest daughter; and with the proverbial difficulty of a lawyer in making his own will, he made the provisions so obscure that it needed an Act of Parliament four years after his death to settle the disputes to which it gave rise, and fifteen years afterwards it was again the subject of litigation.

In 1663 he built Gunnersbury, which he had acquired, from designs it is said by Inigo Jones or his pupil Webb. This mansion afterwards became the palace of King George II.'s daughter, the Princess Amelia.

After the abdication of James II. (1688) the old man, then eighty-six years of age was appointed one of the Commissioners of the Great Seal. King William III. noticing his great age when he came to court observed that he must have outlived nearly all the men of law who had been his contemporaries: he wittily replied, "And I had like to have outlived the law itself had not your Highness come over." He died at his Acton residence, October 9th, 1690, and after lying in state for over a fortnight was buried with great pomp in Ealing Church.



He left a unique collection of records substantially covering Edward the Second's reign with extracts from the records of Edward I. His learning and reputation as a lawyer, his interest in politics, and his fluency in debate made him a notable figure of those eventful times. A great "old book lawyer," one whose "great reading and knowledge in the more profound and perplexed parts of the law," and of "great learning and signal reputation" are terms applied to him by North and Clarendon.

Between the Parish Church and the boundary of Acton the position of "The Elms," already referred to as the residence of the Wegg family, and later of Mr.



*Photo by*

Fielding's House, "Fordhook" (before its removal).

*[Green.*

Shoolbred, Mr. Walmsley, and Alderman George Wright, is also shown on the old map of Tyburn Road as in the occupation of Sir Joseph Ayloffe, Bart. Before the "timber bridge" was reached, West Lodge, the residence of Mr. W. Roebuck, stood on the south side of the road, while Fordhook was beyond the bridge. Other names, going westward on the Ealing Road are suggestive of olden days, such as Thieving Lane! Returning eastwards one notes Broomcroft Lane leading to Broomcroft House which has now entirely disappeared. It was at "Broomcroft House" that Sir John Fielding (half brother of the novelist) the celebrated blind Bow Street Magistrate of the middle of the 18th century, resided at Acton Green; and it was under a bed of periwinkles in Broomcroft Garden, buried in an iron box it is said, that the Church's plate was hidden during the Commonwealth.



"Broomcroft House" stood at the corner of Acton Lane adjoining the site of St. Alban's Mission Church. Mr. G. H. Monson writes:—

"In 1774, John Rann, the highwayman (familiarily known as 'Sixteen String Jack,' from a bunch of sixteen strings which he wore at the knees of his breeches in allusion, so it was generally reported, to the number of times he had been tried and acquitted) was hanged at Tyburn for robbing Dr. Bell, the chaplain to the Princess Amelia in Gunnersbury Lane."

A much earlier reference to Gunnersbury occurs in connection with Alice Pierce, or Perrers, of historical notoriety: Mr. G. H. Monson adds "After the death of Edward III., Alice Perrers, his mistress, was banished. We find

from the Inquisitions taken that year that, in addition to the manor of Pallingswick and a manor at Ruislip, she was also possessed of the manor of 'Gonyldesberg in the Parish of Yellyne.' This is none other than Gunnersbury, so that this notorious lady probably frequently visited our parish in going from Pallingswick to and from Gunnersbury and Ruislip." Faulkner in his "History of Kensington" (1820), also refers to the Pallingswick district: "The ancient highway from London to Turnham Green passed by Tyburn, the Gravel Pits, and branched off to the left at Shepherd's Bush through a field, at the western extremity of which the road is still visible, though now entirely impassable from the overhanging branches of the trees on both sides of the road and from having become a deep slough in the neighbourhood of Pallenswick Green. This was the road where the Earl of Holland drew up his forces previous to the Battle of Brentford, as related by Lord



Henry Fielding.

Clarendon in his 'History of the Great Rebellion.' "Under a Statute of George IV., passed in 1826, a new turnpike road was authorised from Shepherds Bush Common to the Great Western Road at Turnham Green." But to return to the western part of our district, in the year 1754 this was the home of the pioneer novelist, Henry Fielding. His life has frequently been written. Born at Shrappam Park near Glastonbury, 22nd April 1707, he was the great-grandson of George Feilding Earl of Desmond and great-great-grandson of William Feilding first Earl of Denbigh. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was Henry Fielding's second cousin, her mother having also been a granddaughter of the Earl of Desmond. The story is told that Henry Fielding explained the difference between his name and that of other Feildings by saying that "his branch of the family had been the first to learn

to spell." His first literary work was play writing, producing comedies, farces and burlesques, undertaken, as the most profitable literature at that time to meet his needs in the pleasures of London life. His writings seem at that time to have brought only a precarious income and he is described as appearing one day in "the velvet which was in pawn the day before." At the age of 27 he married for the first time Charlotte Cradock. Murphy, one of his biographers, says he "entirely devoured" his wife's little patrimony of £1500 "in less than three years," through his extravagance and conviviality. She is said to be represented by the "Sophia" of "Tom Jones"; while Lady Louisa Stuart says that she was as beautiful and amiable as "Amelia"; and another writer, that "Amelia" was his first wife "even to her noselessness"—a reference to the fact which the novel describes that she had suffered an accident "which destroyed the gristle of her nose." They were devoted lovers; and when Fielding was thirty he gave up play-writing and bent his powerful and active nature and genius, by hard work, to retrieve his fortune and maintain his family. Entering the Middle Temple in 1737 he was called to the bar three years later. At the bar he was not successful; but these professional studies prepared him for his appointment as a magistrate which came later. Meanwhile followed editorial and satirical work, the friendship of Hogarth, whom he never tired of praising, and of Garrick, for whom he adapted two plays, in one of which, it is said, he refused to alter a questionable passage, saying of the audience: "— them let them find that out." He was in the green room drinking champagne when the play was hissed, and hearing that this had taken place, he remarked, "Oh, — them, they have found it out, have they?" His wife's loss of health, influenced no doubt by their financial and other difficulties and struggles, for Fielding "never learnt to be prudent," and her death about 1743 so affected him that his friends feared for his reason. Of this first marriage a daughter Eleanor survived, and went with him on his last voyage to Lisbon. He married again in 1747. He then lived at Back Lane, Twickenham, in "a quaint old fashioned wooden structure" which was standing for about another hundred and thirty years and was only demolished between 1872 and 1883. His great novel "Tom Jones," the "labour of some years," was published in February, 1749, and was from the first a great success; translations appearing afterwards in most countries, and dramatic and comic opera representations of it being made at home and abroad. This book was followed by "Amelia" in 1751, the copyright of which sold for one thousand pounds. Johnson, who "read it through without stopping," says of this book and its heroine: "The most pleasing of all romances," adding, however, "that vile broken nose, never cured, spoilt the sale of perhaps the only book of which, being printed off betimes one morning, a new edition was called for before night." On May 12th 1749 Fielding, who had been energetically fulfilling his magisterial duties to which he had been appointed, was unanimously chosen Chairman of the Middlesex Quarter Sessions at Hicks Hall; and his inquiries into the excessive gin drinking and the increase of robberies in London; a published "proposal for making effectual provision for the poor" and for the erection of a county poor house; his efforts to remove social evils; and his observations upon the poor laws all indicate "knowledge and intelligent reflection" and an anticipation of some problems yet waiting satisfactory solution. Suffering greatly from gout he was ordered to Bath, but was detained in London by the Duke of Newcastle to give advice upon a scheme for suppressing robbers. He devised a plan, and by great activity succeeded in breaking up a gang, and during the immediately succeeding months London was free from the usual outrages. His

health however was broken ; and in March 1754, when a severe winter still lingered, he had a serious illness. It was in May of this year that he came to live at "Fordhook." His enjoyment of it was however to be brief ; for before the middle of the summer as a last resort he had to leave for a warmer climate, and with his wife, daughter, and two servants he sailed for Lisbon. After two months he died there on the 8th October, 1754, and was buried at the English cemetery. His novels, though sometimes wanting in delicacy, by their strong moral sense and powerful delineation of life and character made good the claim that he is "the real founder of the English novel as a genuine picture of men and women." Fielding's



*Photo :*

The High Street, Old Acton, formerly south of St. Mary's.

*Upjohn.*

residence, "Fordhook," beside the western borders of Acton, stood until quite recently within its ample grounds on the north side of Uxbridge Road. The position will be seen indicated on the old Tyburn map, also on Rocque's map, though the name is not given on the latter. Although, like so many of the old mansions of Acton, it has been pulled down to make way for modern building, there remains as a reminder of the past its name given to "Fordhook Avenue." In an article on the historic houses of Acton a writer in the Congregational Church Guild Magazine of May 1894 makes the following reference to "Fordhook" :— "Here lived Henry Fielding, the novelist. The house was then a mere cottage,



and has subsequently been enlarged to its present proportions. He tells us with what regret he left his home when he went abroad—to die at Lisbon. During the rebellion of 1745 he lent the assistance of his pen to the Government, and was rewarded with the then not altogether reputable office of a Middlesex justice. But this old house is not merely noteworthy from the fact of Fielding's residence there. It was again connected with literature, but more indirectly, since it was tenanted by Lady Byron. In 1835 the poet's daughter, Ada, 'sole daughter of my house and heart,' was married in its drawing room, by special licence, to Lord King, afterwards Earl of Lovelace. We have here a remarkable instance of the extraordinary manner in which we are closely connected and linked with the past and its history. It is but a few months ago since Lord Lovelace died. Lord Byron's daughter predeceased her husband by forty-two years, and their second son, and therefore Lord Byron's grandson, Ralph Gordon Noel King, is the 9th and present Earl of Lovelace."

There are two ancient-looking houses standing at the top of Acton Hill, on the north side of the road opposite the tram yard, known by the name of "Mary's Place." A stone tablet is inserted in the front of these houses stating that they were "built in 1588, restored in 1879." Mr. G. H. Monson also writes: "There is a memorial at the west end of the nave of our Parish Church flanked on either side by wooden tablets bearing long epitaphs commemorating Lady Anne Southwell who died 2nd October 1636 aged 63. Lysons records that this monument in his time (1795) was on the south wall of the chancel. He says that the lady was daughter of Sir Thomas Harris of the County of Devon; and wife, first of Sir Thomas Southwell, Kt. of Pixworth in the County of Norfolk, and afterwards of Henry Sibthorpe of the Province of Munster.

Lysons notes that in the Burial Register is an entry 'Elizabeth Lady Sutton wife of Sir Richard buried August 19, 1625.' He quotes from the Burial Register 'The Right Worshipful Sir Thomas Cooock was buried in the Chancel belonging to the Parish Church of Acton August 6, 1678.' Sir Thomas Cooock (or Cooke) lived at the Manor House, East Acton.

'The Right Worshiptful Sir John Godolfin was buried in the chancel belonging to the Parish Church of Acton August 3, 1679. In the chancel is the tomb of Elizabeth Godolfin, daughter of Sir John Godolfin, (Maid of Honour to the Queen), who died in 1683.' His place of residence in Acton is not known, but here we have another distinguished lawyer and Judge of the Admiralty Court and the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in Cromwell's time. He was the author of 'Admiralty Jurisdiction,' the standard authority of his day, and for some time afterwards. At the Restoration he became King's Advocate." In Norden's '*Speculum Britanniae*' almost his only mention of Acton is of the burial of the 'Baron of Burford.' Lysons refers to this as follows:—

"Weever mentions the tomb of Henry Gosse, who died in 1485, and that of Sir Thomas Cornwall, Baron of Burford in the county of Salop, Knight and Banneret, who died in 1537. He adds that he was not a parliamentary baron, but his family were so denominated, as holding their manor of Burford by service of a barony. He died at Acton on his journey into Shropshire. ['Newcourt' gives the same date, but Norden's reference in 1593, as above, is "The Barron of Burford died there as he passed from London, and is covered with a marble stone, in the yeere of Christ 1527.]"

This parish is subject to the jurisdiction of the bishop only, and his commissary, being exempt from that of the Archdeacon. The church is a rectory, being in the

collation of the Bishop of London, who appears sometimes to have granted single turns of the advowson; J. Fregunel, LL.D., having presented to it in 1542, and John Mayle, Esq. in 1562. At the taxation of the diocese of London, A.D. 1327, the church at Acton was valued at 20 marks. In the 'King's books' [1535] the rectory is valued at £14 per ann."

Amongst others mentioned by Lysons as having tombs or monuments in the parish church are the following :—“ Elizabeth, wife of Henry Ramsay, Esq. (1689); William James, Esq., and Colonel Roger James (1712); Charles Moren (1733);



*Photo]*

Old King Street before being demolished.

*[Upjohn.*

and Henry Lloyd, Esq. (1760). In the north-east corner of the nave is the monument of Daniel Wait, Esq., of the Inner Temple, secondary of the Chirographer's Office, who died in 1677, and his wife Anne (afterwards married to Sir John Coryton, Bart.), who died in 1707. On one of the north pillars of the nave is the monument of Frances, daughter of Samuel Trotman (by his wife Elizabeth, only daughter of William Montagu, Baron of the Exchequer), of Siston, in the county of Gloucester, who died in 1698. On the wall of the north aisle is a brass plate to the memory of Humphrey Cavell, Esq., who died in 1558. In the same aisle is the tomb of Edward Smyth, Esq., who died in 1724. In the south aisle are the



A Peep in Springfield Park.

'Sir Henry Heron, Bart., buried Feb. 26, 1748-9.' 'Elizabeth, daughter of Captain Philip Thicknesse and Lady Elizabeth his wife, baptized Aug. 24, 1750.' Of the eccentricities and genius of Philip Thicknesse, his contemporaries need not be told;



Summer and Winter in an old Acton Avenue.

monuments of Barbara, wife of Henry Pigot, Gent., who died in 1649; Martha, wife of James Cocks, Esq., and daughter of Admiral Watson, who died in 1790. Lysons mentions amongst the charities left to Acton, those of Henry Ramsay, Esq., 1693; Mrs. Sarah Crayle, 1730; Mrs. Ann Crayle, 1759; Edward Dickinson, Esq., 1781; and Rebecca Balmer, 1789; and continues:—

"The burials at Acton have uniformly exceeded the baptisms, which is to be attributed to the number of strangers there interred. In the years 1730 and 1731 154 persons were buried, of which number 51 were brought from other parishes. It appears by the chantry roll in the Augmentation Office (temp. Edward VI.) that there were at that time 158 howselyng people, that is, communicants, in the parish of Acton. In the year 1670 there were 88 houses assessed towards affording relief to maimed soldiers. In this assessment were included houses of £2 per annum rent. The present number of houses in Acton [1795] is about 240.

In 1603 there were 31 burials; in 1625, 38. Extracts from the Register: 'Sir John Ashfield, Knt., buried Nov. 3, 1638.' 'Sir John Ashfield, Knt., and Bart., married Elizabeth, daughter and heir of Sir Richard Sutton, and relict of Sir James Altham. Lady Ashfield held 210 acres of land in this parish in the year 1649.' 'Sir John Webb, buried Jan. 27th, 1639-40.' '1714, The Right Honourable John Earl of Marr, and the Lady Frances, daughter of the most noble Marquis of Dorchester, were married July 20.' 'Sir Thomas Travel, Knt., buried Feb. 6, 1723-4.'

as he has published several ingenious works, and written memoirs of his own life, it is probable they will not be unknown to posterity. Being of an unsettled disposition, he frequently changed the place of his abode. This may serve as a memorandum that he once resided at Acton. He died in France in the month of November, 1792. Lady Elizabeth was daughter of the Earl of Castlehaven, from whom Captain Thicknesse's eldest son inherits the ancient barony of Audley, 'Robert Adair,



Esq., buried March 24th, 1790.' Mr. Adair was a surgeon of considerable eminence, and held some of the most honourable and lucrative appointments in his profession, being at the time of his death inspector-general of the hospitals, and surgeon of the Royal hospital at Chelsea. In the year 1759 he married Lady Caroline, daughter of William Anne Earl of Albemarle, by whom he left one son and two daughters.' The Right Hon. Lady Caroline Adair died in 1769. here is a bust of the latter in white marble. They resided at "Bank House."

Before ending the historical portion of this book reference may be made to some views which have been preserved of the old streets near the centre of the town as they existed a few years ago. One of these illustrations gives a view of



A leafy way in Springfield Park, Acton.

the High Street directly to the south of St. Mary's Church. All the buildings along the right, opening upon a raised footway, have been removed, and the site of these is now occupied by the London and South-Western Bank buildings and substantial shops and offices, while a little further on the lower old-time structures have been taken away entirely, and their site thrown into the open space in front of St. Mary's Church. The old "King's Head" sign is seen projecting over the road in the distance. A walk through this portion of the High Street is sufficient to make one realise the great changes which have been taking place in Acton.

Another view shows the cottages and old buildings which were directly at the back of those just described, and bordered upon the northern side of the triangle.

On the left stood the old Church cottage, while other old buildings ran along the narrow street of King's Road, all of which have now been demolished and their sites thrown into the open space in front of St. Mary's Church.

Directly opposite this triangle was the house reputed to have been the last home of Richard Baxter in Acton. Although undoubtedly an old house it is perhaps questionable whether he long occupied it, and his first Acton residence, the house to which many resorted from the church, stood near to the north-east corner of the churchyard. However this old house, which was standing until a few years ago, when it was removed to make way for the London, City and Midland Bank building, was an interesting relic, and has been frequently described. In the *Graphic* of 10th March, 1898, mention is made of it as follows: "Already there is little enough to tell of the days when the village of Acton, in the bustling period of the Commonwealth, was a great stronghold of the Puritan party, and one of the headquarters of the Roundhead Parliamentary army under the Earls of Essex and Warwick. Time and the builder, as with the best part of the trees from which the place took its original name of 'Oak Town,' have swallowed up nearly all her treasured links with the past, and now they would rob her of one of the most interesting memorials of Puritanism in suburban London—the house of Richard Baxter."

Amongst those of note buried in Acton Church, or having monuments or memorials there are three daughters of Sir Charles Scarborough, the eminent physician (1706 and 1707), and one to the memory of the daughter and heir of Robert Searle, merchant.

"She died in 1674  
and of her age the twelfth:  
I'th Blossom of her spring was seen  
What prints of Grace there would have been  
But what her hasty death deny'd  
Is now in Paradise supply'd  
Where there is neither Spring nor Fall  
But Summer's there perpetual

Her early soul in Flower here  
Is ripe to endless glory there  
And now her Virgin soul's Christ's Bride  
And lives with him who for her Dy'd  
Her tender dust too at Christ's call  
Talitha cumi joyful shall  
From the Sleep of Death awake  
Of life and glory to partake."

In Aldred's *Genealogical Collections* reference is made to the "Cherry Orchards" and "Bank House" Acton:—"The Cherry Orchards in Acton, Middlesex, originally belonged to the Somerset family, Lords of Acton Manor, and were purchased from them with other property there, by Christopher Lethieullier, of Belmont, Middlesex." They descended to Benjamin Lethieullier, then to his nephew Sir Harry Featherstonhaugh and were afterwards conveyed to Samuel Wegg of Acton son of George Wegg of Colchester who married firstly Hannah, daughter of Ralph Creffield, by Mary Webster his wife, who became wife to Charles Gray M.P. for Colchester, and secondly, Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Howes, and Elizabeth his wife, daughter of John Coleman of Hardingham) in consideration of £6,010. Eventually the property passed first to his only son, (by Elizabeth Lehook, his wife, daughter and coheiress of Benjamin Lehook, whom he married May 9th 1745) George Samuel Wegg (born July 3rd 1749), a bachelor; and then to George Samuel Wegg's sister Elizabeth Wegg who sold it to John Williamson and Thomas Young.

"The title to Bank House, and some copyhold and leasehold lands at Acton with appurtenances together with a pew or seat in the Parish Church there, can be traced prior to 1673, when in possession of the Child, Bullmar and Grinsell families. The copyhold portion to "Bank House," was held of Ealing (otherwise Zealing) Mano cum Acton, and Sarah Ladds was admitted in fee on March 27th 1769, on surrender of Richard Pye, who had been admitted thereto on same day, whose grandmother Jane Thynne had been admitted November 8th 1708.

The leasehold portion to "Bank House," was held for 500 years from 1746, at a peppercorn, being assigned by John and Daniel Ward, hoymen and partners, of Aylesford, Kent, and Thomas Knowlden, of Acton, Carpenter, on July 10th 1769, to Sarah Ladds. Thus Bank House and grounds were of three tenures, the house and grounds were freehold, small kitchen garden, etc., leasehold, and part of garden



in front copyhold of Acton Manor at small fine certain and small quit rent, as evidenced from the titles and plan.

Sarah Ladds of Acton (formerly Sarah Slaney, sister to Elizabeth Lehook, formerly Slaney, who died January 4th 1786, and buried in Mrs. Ladds grave at St. Gabriel's, Fenchurch Street, then widow of Benjamin Lehook, whom she married Sept. 26th, 1723), widow of William Ladds, Esq., erected a new house chiefly on the site of the old Bank House, thrown further back from the entrance gates to allow of a carriage drive thereto. By Will of February 20th 1771, proved by her brother, John Slaney (who died at St. George's Tombland, in Norwich, July 17th, 1791), and the said Samuel Wegg, on March 20th 1771, gave same to niece Elizabeth, wife of Samuel Wegg for life, and their two daughters, Elizabeth Wegg and Sarah Wegg (born May 20th 1753) afterwards wife of Rev. Richard Prosser, D.D., Prebendary of Durham Cathedral whom she married June 16th 1796, in fee equally.

On July 7th 1837, this house and premises were sold at Garraways Coffee House, Change Alley, Cornhill, to John North, the particulars stating the coach-

house without the walls belonged to the Rectory, held at a small rent, and the mansion was described as the late residence of Robert Adair, Esq., who was born in 1760, and married Eliza Payne, dau. of a London Merchant. The Pew being excepted therefrom being added to Acton House, in possession of and belonging to Elizabeth Wegg. Acton House was a Mansion at the end of the town of Acton, passing from Joseph Ayloff Houlding, in 1749, to Samuel Wegg, by purchase, then to his only son George Samuel Wegg, and eldest daughter, Elizabeth



"Acton Church, Middlesex," drawn by J. Cullum, 1823.

Wegg, in this Title the families of Keeling, Micklefield, and King are mentioned. Elizabeth Wegg, spinster, the last descendant of Samuel Wegg and Elizabeth (Lehook) his wife, died on Aug. 20th 1842, her Will dated Feb. 14th 1827, being proved by Charles Gray Round, of Colchester, on Sept. 16th 1842. The Weggss were of 'East Anglia' and are of remote origin, and their title to the Essex Estates afford many interesting particulars of the family."

But these must end the references to former notable residents. Many of the pleasant walks which were characteristic of Old Acton have already become blocks of suburban villas; but here and there remain indications of those pleasant leafy ways where broken lines of trees or ancient shrubberies still exist. Some of these are to be seen along Creswick Road and in the portions of Springfield Park which are yet unbuilt upon. A favourite walk was along the Green Lane running from the Uxbridge Road over the Great Western Railway toward Twyford. In summer its overhanging trees made a cool deep shade, and the fields on either side gave the charm of quiet and retirement which had for long centuries, even until a very recent date, characterised Acton. This lane for a time bore the name Mill Lane, then of Wegg Avenue; and is now Twyford Avenue.





The Rectory, Acton, from the garden.



Fine old Bannisters  
Acton Rectory.

It will be seen that Acton in its time has possessed many interesting old residences—houses which came to be famous not merely from the fact of their antiquity, but equally, if not more so, from the reputations and characters of the great historic personages who chose to live therein: some like Sir Matthew Hale, seeking the quiet of the “simple life” in an unpretentious dwelling; or as Baxter seeking, if they did not always obtain, in its reputed peacefulness and repose favourable conditions for their studies and writing.

In closing this long chapter on the history of Acton the writer wishes again to acknowledge the kindness of the Rev. Prebendary Harvey, M.A., who was one of the first to offer help, and to quote the closing words of his paper on “Acton in the Olden Time,” which has been freely referred to in the early part of this section:—

“May our interest in the Acton of the past lead all who read these pages to do all they can to improve, develope, and raise the Acton of the present, not only before men but also before God.”

Religious.

IV.



[Photo]

[Elliott and Fry.

Rev. Principal Walter F. Adeney, M.A., D.D.

Right Rev. James Macarthur, D.D.,  
Bishop of Southampton.

Acton numbers amongst those who have been its residents not a few who have become prominent as leaders in the Religious world,—the Rev. Principal Walter F. Adeney, M.A., D.D., the present President of the Congregational Union; the Rev. Wm. Cuff, a past President of the Baptist Union; the Rev. A. H. Dunn, D.D., Lord Bishop of Quebec; the Rev. James MacArthur, D.D., the former Bishop of Bombay and present Suffragan Bishop of Southampton; the Rev. E. A. Parry, D.D., the Bishop of Guiana; the Rev. Prebendary Harvey, M.A., former Rector and first Chairman of the Acton School Board; the late Rev. Edward Parry, D.D., the former Bishop of Dover; the Rev. William Bolton, M.A., the last Chairman of the Acton School Board; the Rev. Canon Hindley, M.A., first President of the

The late Right Rev. Edward Parry, D.D.,  
Bishop of Dover.Right Rev. E. A. Parry, D.D.,  
Bishop of Guiana.





Right Rev. A. H. Dunn, D.D.,  
Bishop of Quebec.



*Photo*

[Haines,  
Rev. W. Cuff.

Acton Temperance Federation, and others who have been worthy successors of the saintly Baxter and the devoted Lloyd of former times; and whose more recent labours and broad-minded Christian brotherliness are held in remembrance and will long be cherished in Acton, although they have themselves passed to other fields of service. Space will not permit, and it is not the plan of this book to give personal sketches of those whose lives are ours in the activities of the present day; but no true presentation of Acton life would be complete which omitted the grateful mention of these, and the acknowledgement of the town's indebtedness to them for their helpful, devoted labours, and far-reaching influence.

One result of this spirit of charity and mutual regard has been an unusual measure of united effort in the great common causes of education, peace, temperance, lectures for the promotion of social welfare, and philanthropic work. Increased co-operation would doubtless have even larger blessing and more manifest results; but for what has been already accomplished in this direction recognition is due to those above mentioned, and to others who have successfully carried on these traditions.

Notwithstanding the fact that Acton figured as a centre of Puritanism in Cromwell's time, and that doubtless there have lingered here,



Rev. Prebendary C. M. Harvey, M.A., and family  
in the Rectory Garden.

as in other places, many of the influences of that period, the religious profession of the town as indicated by the Census taken by the *Daily News* enumerators in 1903 showed that the attendances at the Anglican Churches were rather more than half of those made in the town. Of the chief of these, the Parish Church of St. Mary's, there are several illustrations, and about it, as already stated, gathers much of the early history of Acton. Views of the successive churches on this site have been shown. A very fair view of the present edifice, as it is now, is seen from the north-east corner, the point at which the new tramway from Willesden Junction has its terminus.

In the graveyard of the Church are many interesting old tombstones. Here, near the corner, is the "family vault of Sir Richard Birnie Knt. of Broomcroft in



St. Mary's Parish Church: from the north-east.

this parish," and the tomb of the Rev. William Antrobus, B.D., and his wife. He was "Rector of this parish and of St. Andrew Undershaft in the City of London," having been "collated to the latter benefice in 1794 and to the former in 1797 by Beilby Porteous, Bishop of London, to whom he was domestic chaplain." He died 10th Jan., 1853, in the 93rd year of his age, having been Rector of Acton 55 years. Within, upon the Church walls, are many notable memorials, to several of which reference has already been made. At the east end of the Church it is understood that the house was situated which was probably, in bygone days, the first Acton residence of Richard Baxter and later of Sir Mathew Hale.

Viewing the Church from the opposite end, standing in the open triangle

already described, on the right are the new Bank buildings of the London and South-Western Bank, and the bend of the High Street around in front of these, by which the tramway lines pass to Shepherd's Bush. Other picturesque views are obtained from the County School grounds, also one of the church tower from the south-west.

Of the earlier structures the Rev. Prebendary Harvey, M.A., wrote in the year 1883: "Rather more than a hundred years ago workmen might be seen casing the old tower of the Parish Church with red brick. It had at that time all its bells except one, which has on it the inscription, 'God our Saviour,' and the date of its erection, *i.e.*, 1810. One of the bells has inscribed on it the date 1583.

There are probably people living in Acton still who have witnessed within their lifetime two distinct restorations—(as alterations are always called)—of



St. Mary's Parish Church from the west, and the London and South-Western Bank.

the Parish Church. Owing to the bracing air, the pretty scenery, and its nearness to London, the neighbourhood of Acton began during the first years of this century to see more and more of those happy comfortable English homes which bear witness to our country's ever increasing wealth; and the little knots or crowds at the doors of the old Church on Sunday mornings told more and more plainly that there was an utter want of accommodation. In 1837, therefore, the Church was considerably enlarged, and as a result of the process it achieved the distinction of being called by the Bishop of London "the ugliest church in his diocese," although many of the people of Acton were far from agreeing with him. Acton, however, still went on increasing, and as a consequence the old Church was in 1866 entirely pulled down, and the present handsome nave, aisles, and chancel erected.





Interior St. Mary's Church.

of Margaret Fieldhouse, who died in 1661 aged 100, and another in memory of Mary Hill, who was buried September 1st, 1662, also aged 100. These particulars, given on the tablet, were extracted from the Parish Register and placed upon this memorial. There is also a tablet to the memory of William Aldridge, who died here in 1698 at the age of 115, to whom reference has already been made. He lies buried in the churchyard, and a copy of his portrait, engraved when he was 112 years old, which appeared in Lyson's "Environs of London," and which has been already shown, now hangs in the church. He was a wheelwright by trade, and three generations later we find that the great-grandson of this centenarian, one William Aldridge, died in 1800, aged 92. The register abounds with instances of old inhabitants of Acton living well beyond their allotted three-score years and ten.

Besides the various other

In 1877 the tower was taken down. Four bells were taken to Warner, Cripplegate, to recast. The inscriptions on these were as follows:—

'Lester & Pack, fecit 1764.'

'Hope in God. 1637. E. K.'

'Peace and Good Neighbourhood, God save the Church and Queen. James Byle. Londini fecit 1712.'

'1583. H. E. A. B. G. G. R. B. F.'

A new tenor bell was cast, and the peal increased to eight bells."

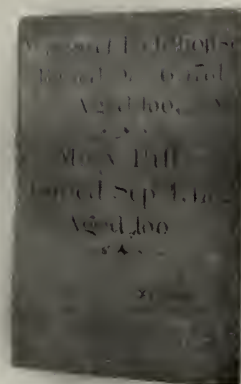
A few tablets in the Parish Church are of interest as indicating the great ages to which many Acton residents have lived. One is in memory



St. Mary's Church Tower from the South-west.

1244. GREGORY FITZWALTER.	1486. JOHN BYRDE.	1797. WILLIAM ANTROBUS. B.D.
1290. JOHN DE ACTON.	1542. HUGO TURNBULL.	1853. JOHN SMITH. B.D.
1320. RALPH DE ACTON.	1563. RALPH COCKERELL.	1859. EDWARD PARRY. M.A.
1336. ADAM PYKEMAN.	1576. JOHN KENDALL.	1869. CHARLES MUSGRAVE HARVEY.
1381. RICHARD DE PERTENHALE.	1627. DANIEL FEATLEY. D.D.	1896. GEORGE SPENCER DE SAUSMAREZ.
1365. WILLIAM DE COLEYNE.	1643. PHILIP NYE. M.A.	
1403. RICHARD THURSTON.	1660. BRUNO RYVES. D.D.	
1400. JOHN WYRSATT.	1677. ANTHONY SAUNDERS. D.D.	
JOHN WYCHTON.	1719. WILLIAM HALL.	
JOHN DALBY.	1726. EDWARD COBDEN. D.D.	
JOHN BERDEVILE.	1764. GEORGE BERKELEY. LL.D.	
1452. JOHN ISAAC.	1768. PHILIP COCKS.	

Rectors of Acton.



Tablet in St. Mary's.

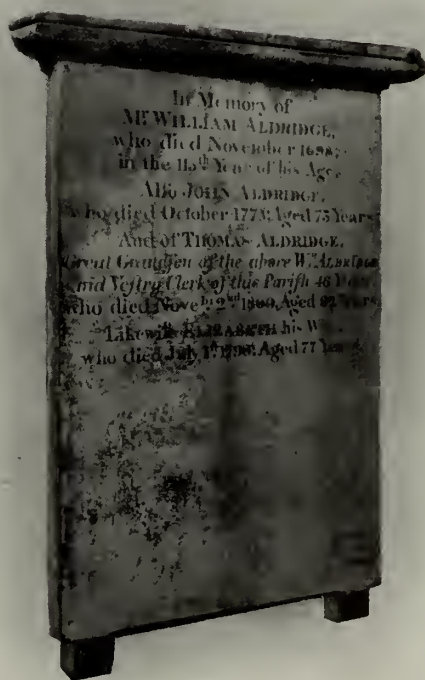
extracts from the Parish Register which have been given, the following may be noted:—

“1707, Aug. 12th, baptized Elizabeth, daughter of the Rev. Dr. Willis, Dean of Lincoln. He was afterwards successively Bishop of Gloucester, Salisbury, and Worcester.”

St. Mary's is the centre of a great deal of the active religious work in Acton, the Rev. G. S. de Sausmarez, M.A., who is also a member of the District Council and Chairman of the Education Committee, having been Rector since 1896. There are in connection with the work of the Church large Sunday Schools, lads' and men's clubs, and a parish room, etc., and under an able staff of visitors and helpers much visitation and other parish work is carried on.

One of the most active of Nonconformist influences in the town has been that of the Congregational body, whose recently retired and much esteemed Pastor for a great many years, the Rev. William Bolton, M.A., has been one of the most energetic and highly respected of our citizens. To him the writer is indebted for particulars of the early history of this important work:—

“The earliest Nonconformist assemblies for worship in Acton appear to have been the meetings at the residence of Richard Baxter, who while living in the Parish opened his house for a religious service. No regular congregation was organised, nor was any



Aldridge Tablet in St. Mary's Church.

church founded. Baxter used to preach before the hour of morning service in the Parish Church, and then dismiss his congregation that they might attend there—where indeed he was in the habit of taking the Communion himself. Baxter's preaching drew hearers not only from Acton, but from Brentford and the regions round about. When his enemies took alarm and effected his arrest, Baxter was imprisoned on account of these very services at Acton, and the congregation ceased to assemble. We have no record of any Nonconformist services in Acton during the 18th century.

The first Nonconformist church formed in Acton was that of the Independents' meeting in a little chapel on Acton Hill. Acton Chapel was built in the year 1817. In 1823 a church was formed consisting of nine members who united themselves together under a solemn covenant, which indicates the kind of people they were, and the purposes they had in view by uniting in fellowship.

'We whose names are hereunto affixed desire most humbly to adore the riches of divine grace and mercy, through which the Son of God was given up to death for our redemption from sin and misery, and the Holy Spirit was sent to call us by the glorious gospel out of darkness into His marvellous light. And being now, we humbly trust, the people of God (though unworthy of the least of His mercies), and having first unreservedly given up ourselves to the Lord, we do now in His holy presence unfeignedly give up ourselves to each other, and we hereby solemnly declare (the Lord being our helper) that we will renounce sin, self-righteousness, the world and Satan as becomes all professed members of the visible church of the Lord Jesus. And we promise to love each other with a pure heart fervently, to bear one another's burdens, to practice forbearance and kindness, to promote each other's benefit, to walk humbly with our God, and as far as lies in our power regularly to attend the ordinances of divine worship together, as well as meetings of the Church for business, and conscientiously discharge all the duties incumbent on the members of a Christian Church.

Then we desire to join ourselves to the Lord and His people in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten, seeking His grace and divine approbation through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

The little church appears to have had a chequered history during the next half century, more than once it became virtually extinct, and the chapel was closed.

During the years 1864-65 services were conducted in the chapel by Baptists. In August of the latter year it was re-opened by the Independents, and in the following year, the old church being considered extinct, a new church was formed on May 22nd. In March, 1867, the first anniversary of the re-opening of the chapel and the jubilee of the first opening of the chapel were celebrated, and the desirability of erecting a new chapel was warmly advocated; and the first step was taken towards the erection of the present buildings by promises amounting to £40.

In January, 1868, the old chapel was closed, and the congregation removed to the 'Lecture Hall' ['Acton Hall'], in Church Road, until the chapel in Churchfield Road was ready. This building was opened in March 1871 and in the December of the following year the Rev. W. F. Adeney, M.A., D.D., who had been chosen pastor, commenced his ministry. During his seventeen years of work in Acton considerable extension was made. The rapidly enlarging Sunday School required more accommodation, and the Churchfield Hall was built. Mission work was carried on in South Acton and found a permanent home in an iron building erected in Palmerston Road, and various organizations of active Church life were established and developed."

In 1889 Dr. Adeney who had been appointed tutor at New College, St. John's Wood, brought his ministry to a close, and the following year the Rev. William Bolton, M.A., was appointed pastor.



In the years which followed further additions were made to the buildings to provide for the needs of growing work. The block of buildings at the corner of Spencer and Churchfields Roads—the Church and Lecture Hall, numerous Class Rooms and Caretaker's Cottage—constitute a substantial centre for extensive work of many kinds. Further particulars were given by Mr. Bolton in 1902:—

“Provision was made at the beginning of the re-establishment of the church for the care of the young people. A schoolroom was part of the original plan, and beneath it was a cellar, in which, for lack apparently of a better place, the little children were taught. The accommodation was speedily inadequate for the



Congregational Church and Churchfield Hall, Acton.

enlarging school, and soon there was found for it a more commodious home in the Churchfield Hall. To this building, subsequently, a large range of class-rooms and a separate room for infant children were added, so that the better method of teaching might be carried out, and the quieter work of the individual class be realised. At the present time the school has outgrown these arrangements; whilst every room is filled classes have to be taught in the Hall.

The Guild, which in varying forms has been in active existence for many years, is another means of direct association for the young people with the Church. The purpose expressed year after year by a note on the programme will sufficiently indicate the aim of this branch of work: ‘The quickening and develop-

ment of the spiritual, moral and intellectual life of the members and their power of Christian service; the encouragement of healthful recreation and the promotion of true unity and brotherliness.' The type of life nurtured under such influence should be that which will recognise the widespread claim and authority of true religion, finding at the Centre strength to work through every part. There has been the endeavour to maintain the missionary spirit, which is itself the genuine spirit of Christianity. The intimate association between members of the Guild and some branches of the mission work at South Acton, and the foreign missionary work of the Church, are forms of this.

The Church is itself an auxiliary of the London Missionary Society. In addition to its part in the general work of the society, by means of the various agencies, it has been closely connected with the support of one of the earlier of the native medical women in North India.

For many years there has been a flourishing Band of Hope. There is still such a society for the younger children, but an active junior branch of the 'Sons of Temperance' has practically taken the place of the older work. This with its senior section although not directly connected with the church, find a meeting place in one of the rooms associated with it. Nor is this the only society working for the well-being of the people in the encouragement of thrift and sobriety which has its meeting place in or about the Churchfield Hall. For many years it has been in frequent requisition for Meetings and Entertainments.

Nearly ten years ago a P.S.A. Society for men was formed, on an unsectarian basis, the meetings of which have been regularly held in the Church. The society has never been a large one, but in a quiet way not a little good influence has been exerted, and men have found some of the reality of the meaning of the motto, which declares the ever present and active aim of the society: 'One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.' Any man over eighteen years of age is eligible for membership. This age was chosen so as to avoid any apparent competition with Sunday School work.

The South Acton Mission in Palmerston Road has been in recent years under the care of a missionary, a plan which was adopted with the view of maintaining more consecutive work and influence, amid conditions which often make the effort very arduous.

There is a meeting of a small Adult School for men on Sunday mornings. The Sunday School has outgrown the accommodation, whilst various forms of work amongst men and women, girls and boys fully occupy the rooms during the greater part of the year. Here, as elsewhere, influence is exerted in many little recognised ways which cannot be tabulated."

The Rev. Wm. Bolton for a long period devoted much time to the educational needs of the district, and was the first Chairman of the Education Committee formed when the Act of 1902 came into operation. The town has in these and many other ways, owed much to his devoted labours. Upon his return from a tour of visitation to the Mission Stations in China under the London Missionary Society, of which he was Vice-Chairman, a town's meeting was held under the presidency of the Rector, the Rev. G. S. De Sausmarez, M.A., to accord him a public welcome home. His recent retirement and resignation of the pastorate on account of his health is a great loss, and keenly felt by his fellow townsmen; and it was decided at a town's meeting presided over by Mr. Councillor W. J. Boissonnade J.P. Chairman of the District Council to found a Bolton Scholarship in recognition of his public services.

The Recognition Service of the present minister, the Rev. Roderick G. Davies took place on October 9th this year, when the Rev. Principal W. F. Adeney presided.

The first Baptist Church founded in the town was that in Church Road. It is a commodious building, and an earnest work has been carried forward therein. It provides seating accommodation for a congregation of about 800 persons.

In 1856 a Mr. John Whitehorn—to whose memory a tablet is erected in the chapel—came to reside in Acton. At that time the Parish Church was the only place of worship in the town, with the exception of a small Independent Chapel, and even in that there was then no church formed. The Wesleyans met in a small room in the Steyne.

In 1863 Mr. Whitehorn secured the services of the Rev. C. P. Sawday, of Vernon Chapel, for weeknight services. In 1864 Mr. Ebenezer Taylor, of Marlow, laboured in the cause for a year, and in October of the same year the foundation stone of the Church was laid by Henry Wright, Esq., of Kensington. It was completed and opened under most promising circumstances in March, 1865.



Acton P.S.A. Congregational Church.

In November of the same year the church membership was formed by the Rev. W. G. Lewis, of Westbourne Grove, who had taken a deep interest in the cause, and had acted as Chairman of the Committee.

During the year 1865, the Rev. John Keed, of Cambridge, accepted the pastorate, and laboured with great earnestness and much success. A tablet in the chapel bears record of the loving esteem in which he was held. Mr. Francis Draper describes his last sermon, and writes: "It was said that he contracted a cold in the act of baptising a member after he had heated himself by his exertion in preaching a very fervent and powerful sermon."

In March, 1872, the Rev. Wm. Cuff, now of Shoreditch Tabernacle, accepted the pastorate; but within a year he resigned, feeling that Acton was not the sphere



for the most fruitful exercise of his gifts. In a letter to the writer he says: "I do not forget Acton, as I was very happy and successful there. Then it was nothing like what it is now. Its growth has been amazing."

A notice which appeared in the *Daily News* in the year 1905 stated that when Mr. Cuff went to the old Tabernacle at Shoreditch in 1872, he preached his first sermon to seventy-five persons. The church soon becoming too small they moved to the Shoreditch Town Hall, where a congregation of 2000 was gathered in a few

months; and there he preached for seven years, while funds were being raised for the new Tabernacle, which was erected at the cost of £25,000, providing accommodation for 3000 worshippers. From the first the new Tabernacle was crowded. The interviewer learned from Mr. Cuff that he attributed his success "mainly to the plain, simple preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. No brass bands, no elaborate music, no startling advertisements—just the gospel, nothing more."

In March, 1873, the Rev. W. McMeikan succeeded to the pastorate, resigning in March, 1875. In August of the same year the Rev. C. M. Longhurst followed, and devoted himself to the cause for ten years, resigning in 1885. During this period much useful work was done; the galleries were added to the building, and many joined the church.

The recent pastor, the Rev. W. A. Davis,

accepted the pastorate in 1885, and for more than twenty-six years laboured for the cause in our midst. During this time a valuable property was secured in Mill Hill Grove, on a part of which new schools and a lecture hall were erected. The stone was laid, amid much rejoicing, on January 18th, 1899, by W. J. Amherst, Esq., when there assembled a large and representative gathering to congratulate the Pastor and people, and show practical sympathy with the good work. Sunday Schools and



Church Road Baptist Church.

Bible Classes are held in the school-rooms at the rear of the church. The Rev. W. A. Davis, who has resigned his charge during the present year, was an active member of the Free Church Council and an earnest speaker and advocate for temperance and other causes of reform, and will be much missed in Acton.

A further development of the Baptist cause which has been very active, is the Horn Lane Baptist Church, now firmly established in an iron building at the corner of Horn Lane and Faraday Road under the Pastorate of the Rev. Leopold Clarke. Here an energetic and progressive congregation has been gathered; courses of lectures for the public, Sunday School, and other classes being carried on in addition to the ordinary church services. The growth of this church has been steady, and promises well for much effective work in the north of Acton. The excellent Sunday School and young people's gatherings, etc., are hopeful branches.

Two prominent features in Acton are the spires of All Saints' and St. Dunstan's



Horn Lane Baptist Church.

churches. The first of these is situated in South Acton, and was erected during the residence in Acton of Rev. Dr. Dunn, then the Vicar of All Saints. The church has accommodation for a large congregation. From this centre much religious work has for many years been carried on. While the Rev. Edward Parry was Rector of Acton he had the foresight to secure sites for two churches in this vicinity—those on which All Saints' and St. Alban's churches now stand. The first erection at All Saints' was a "school church," which still stands as part of the group of buildings. The Rev. Andrew Hunter Dunn became Vicar at the beginning of 1871, and the following year All Saints' Church was opened. Dr. Dunn continued to labour for the welfare of this neighbourhood until the year 1892, when he became Bishop of Quebec. The remembrance of his work, and his occasional visits, have kept his name closely associated with this district and the town generally. The Rev. James Macarthur, M.A.

who succeeded him, remained at South Acton five years, until he, too, received the same distinction, and became, first, Bishop of Bombay, and afterwards, Bishop-Suffragan of Southampton. In the Rev. W. Paton Hindley, M.A., who was the next Vicar, Acton had for ten years an earnest worker in educational, temperance, and other causes, as well as in his immediate church work; and it will be remembered by many besides his former colleagues, that, when it was found needful for the growth and efficient carrying on of the boys' schools, which were formerly held in the All Saints' school buildings, to remove them to the new South Acton boys' school, the broad-minded attitude of the Vicar at the time of this transfer much deepened the general esteem in which he was already held throughout Acton. He

was President of the Acton Temperance Federation, and both he and Mrs. Hindley contributed much to the growth and strength of this work. Many regretted their going, when, in 1908, he accepted an appointment in the gift of His Majesty the late King Edward, and became Vicar of Newark. In July he was made Canon of Southwell. The present Vicar of All Saints' is the Rev. William A. Macleod, M.A.

In connection with the All Saints' Church there is an active Sunday School work, the buildings formerly used for day schools being now devoted to this purpose. The recognition by all denominations of the importance to be given to the religious training of the young, as a distinct part of church work, and as forming one of the most important parts of their religious activity, cannot be too strongly



All Saints' Church, South Acton.

emphasized. Reliance solely upon ordinary day schools to give the religious training to children, and treating it as a task or a lesson, instead of the happy development of spiritual life, has been all too common. In this way we may have been missing one of the greatest means for truly promoting religious life and interest amongst the people. Religious instruction in day schools has its value as instruction; but in the very nature of things it cannot compensate for the loss of specific religious work. What can be given in any day school is entirely different from the influence that should pervade a live, earnest, sympathetic, and well-appointed Sunday school. Until this is recognised, and the churches awaken to the first necessity of such





St. Peter's Mission Church, Acton.

training not being merely a part of the week's task, but a joy and a delight, and the scholars look forward to the Sunday School as a meeting with personal friends, and a time of real interest, refreshment, and help, large masses of the people, as at the present time, will continue to be truly described as those who have lapsed from any manifest interest in organised religious life.

In the neighbourhood opened up by the laying out of new streets off the Southfield Road a new building has been erected for St. Peter's Mission Church, which for a time met in one of the halls of the Southfield Road Schools. This work has, from its inception, been under the Rev. Hubert G. Houseman, M.A., and is connected with All Saints'. It began in a tent in 1906, and a year later the present building, which is made of Frazzi blocks, was opened. It is designed eventually to become the Parish Hall, the site providing for a permanent church. Besides the usual church work, schools, clubs, etc., a mission room under the care of the church has been opened in Somerset Road.

Rising amidst stately elms, and situated in very pleasant surroundings in the little hamlet and modern suburb still called East Acton, St. Dunstan's church spire is a conspicuous landmark, which can be seen from a considerable distance. The church was erected and endowed by the Goldsmiths' Company out of the Perryn Trusts in the years 1878-79. Upon the foundation stone are inscribed the words of Nehemiah 3, 32:—"And between the ascent of the corner and the sheep gate repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants." The church is a red brick building in harmony with the prevailing architecture of the locality. The former senior clergyman of the district, the late Rev. T. M. Hayter, M.A., was the first

Vicar—October 23rd, 1879. For some years previously mission services had been held in a barn forming part of the buildings of the Cotchings farm lying to the south of the church. Sunday School work is carried on in the East Acton Church School-rooms, which are also still used for a day school under the Acton Education Committee.

East Acton has ever seemed like a separate village, and St. Dunstan's, standing apart from the rest of the town, has, perhaps, shared this seclusion. On the death



St. Dunstan's Church, East Acton.

of the late Rev. T. M. Hayter, he was succeeded by the Rev. Wallace Mackenzie Le Patourel, M.A., the present Vicar.

On the south side of East Acton, along Acton Vale, St. Barnabas' Mission Church, an iron building, has been standing for a number of years. The surrounding neighbourhood has rapidly become occupied with factories. The celebrated Napier works and other motor establishments are quite near, as well as Messrs. Eastman and Co.'s dyeing and cleaning works. The Rev. Arthur F. Collyer, A.K.C., is the Vicar designate.



St. Barnabas' Church, Acton Vale.

The church of St. Alban the Martyr, Acton Green, is one of the churches of which the site was secured by the Rev. Edward Parry, who was Rector of Acton from 1859 to 1869—a time when the town first began to develop. The first erection there has since become the Parish Hall. The church is pleasantly situated at the extreme south of the district, with the open Acton Green surrounding it; while eastward is Bedford Park, and immediately north many new streets have been opened and recently covered with residences. The Vicar is the Rev. Wm. G. Woolsey, M.A.



St. Alban's Church and Parish Hall.



On Bollo Bridge Road there is a branch of the Methodist body which has for many years been carrying forward a good work. This is the Free Methodist Connexion. They formerly held their meetings in the iron building at the rear of the new church. Much of the burden and responsibility for keeping this branch together has rested upon a few families, amongst whom were Mr. George Pratt's and those of other earnest and deeply interested workers. The new building was erected under the pastorate of the Rev. George Britton before his removal, for a time, to the north of England. The present pastor is the Rev. Edward Clarke. There is an abundant field for work in the district in which this church is placed. Mr. Francis Draper, in an interesting article on early Nonconformity in Acton, thus describes an open-air meeting he attended at Bollo Bridge about forty years ago, at which the Rev. Wm. Cuff was the speaker :



Free Methodist Church, Acton.



Unitarian Church, Acton.

“ Presently the preacher arrived, accompanied by several members of his own congregation from the Baptist Chapel, which had not long before been erected in Church Road. The pastor was a young man full of strength and vigour. Neither his form, nor his face, nor his habiliments suggested anything that would lead one to conclude that he was a preacher. I think I see him now



Primitive Methodist Church, Acton.

religious interests of this thickly populated neighbourhood. The Rev. James Dobson of Ealing is the minister.

Amongst other congregations of the town are the Unitarians, worshipping in the iron church in Creffield Road, opposite the Haberdashers' School, of which the Rev. A.C. Holden, M.A. is the minister; the Berrymead Mission Room of the Brethren at 38, Avenue Road, Acton; St. Cuthbert's Mission Church in Osborne Road, the last-named being in connection with All Saints', South Acton; and the Railway Mission, Cunnington Street, Acton Green.

The Mission Church of St. Andrew's, opposite the Priory Schools, is the scene of active work, and has been in charge of the Rev. George Wm. Tuohy, M.A., who

coming striding along, with a quick, firm and determined step. He is tall and broad, has a round face with plenty of colour in it, and wearing a genial smile which seemed to be the index of a fund of cheerful, happy resolution stored in the loving heart that dwelt within. It was William Cuff, one of Mr. Spurgeon's students, who had not long since accepted the pastorate of the church, in succession to the Rev. Alfred Taylor, one of the gentlest, most loving men that I have ever known. There are those in Acton now who never lay them down without offering up a prayer of thankfulness for the blessings which he was made the instrument of bringing to them."

Another of the early Non-conformist churches of Acton is that of the Primitive Methodists on Park Road North. It was erected in the year 1867, and still continues to fill a very useful place in the locality. It has had its struggles and difficulties to contend with; but a band of earnest workers have for years taken an active part in the



St. Andrew's Mission Church, Acton.

*Photo*

*(Ellingham Parker.)*

is shortly removing to become the Rector of St. Faith's, Brentford. This Mission was begun when the Rev. C. J. Sharp, now of Christ's Church, Hornsey, was in Acton, and was commenced in shop premises. A feature of the work is a service for children on Sunday morning at 11 o'clock. The font in use here was formerly in old St. Mary's Church, with which this is connected.

One of the most recent and striking Church buildings of our town is the new Wesleyan Church, erected on the brow of Acton Hill, immediately in front of the new County School playgrounds, and on the site formerly occupied by "The Oaks." The site is in a commanding position on the main road to London, and near the premises previously occupied by the congregation. The new building has well carried out the purpose put forth in the appeal to "worthily represent the great church" of this connection. The design of the architects Messrs. Gordon and Gunton represented a spire rising from the massive square stone tower. Of this portion only the tower has been erected up to the present time. For many years the Wesleyans met in the substantial stone chapel in Gunnersbury Lane. The congregation, however, outgrew that building, which has now been added to the adjoining school buildings for Sunday School work.

The stone laying ceremony of the new church took place in May, 1906, during the time when the Rev. Richard Smith was resident Minister; and the opening services were in April of the following year, under his successor, the Rev. E. S. Burnett. The building is planned to seat about 1000 worshippers. The present minister is the Rev. T. B. Hindsley. About the middle of the last century the Wesleyan cause began in Acton, but the house which was used for holding meetings afterwards became the "Rising Sun" public house. One of the principal adherents at that time was Mr. Thomas Farmer, who lived at Gunnersbury House, and who laid the foundation stone of the Gothic Chapel in Gunnersbury Lane, 16th July, 1857. The Rev. John Hay, father-in-law of the Rev. E. S. Burnet, was the minister who was first stationed in the district. The Gunnersbury Lane building became, in 1867, the mother church of a new circuit, comprising Ealing and Acton. The interior of the new church



Wesleyan Methodist Church, Acton Hill.



is handsomely finished in pitch pine ; electric light is installed, and tinted cathedral glass used throughout, the whole producing a most pleasing effect. Since the opening of the New Church the congregation has continued to increase, and a further branch of work undertaken here is the Acton Hill Brotherhood—a movement very similar to that of the P.S.A.

The new Church of St. Martin's is situated in the rapidly developing district on the north side of the Ealing Road, and has gathered a considerable congregation. The Rev. J. H. Blackman, who was for



St. Martin's Church, West Acton.

some years in charge of St. Andrew's Church, was the first Incumbent, in the beginning as Vicar designate and afterwards as Vicar. The dedication of the temporary building in which the church first worshipped took place on the 11th of November, 1903. Three years later the handsome new church, designed by Messrs. E. Monson and Sons, was opened by the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of London, Dr. Winnington Ingram, in the presence of a large congregation. In the course of an appropriate sermon he pointed out that too often it happened that churches were built much too late, and that the people, having gone without a place of worship for some years, were not inclined to take the interest in it afterwards that they should. In this matter the congregation of St. Martin's were to be congratulated on their zeal and earnestness, and prompt action in meeting the need of the new district. After referring to the prevalence of sin everywhere, secret or open, and the abiding need of deliverance therefrom, the Bishop said :—

“ I have been driven back more and more every day to the very simple religion and the very simple truth which, to me, is the light of life. Every day I have the sound of my Master's feet behind me. He never asks of me any work which is too hard, or any trial too hard to bear. Every problem, however hard it may appear for the moment, He helps me to solve. I have lived my life in this simple way. And I want to impress upon you all here in St. Martin's Church to have a truly Catholic spirit—a spirit of brotherhood—and a generous spirit amongst you, to take an interest not only in your own church, but in the church in the next parish, and the churches all over London, having at all times the sound of the Master's feet behind you.” The present Vicar is the Rev. Charles Sergeant, who is also President of the Acton Horticultural Society.

Some of the early Roman Catholic services in Acton have already been referred to. These included those held in the little Chapel fitted up in the old timbered house opposite St. Mary's Church, and the tenancy, at the beginning of the 19th century for a time, of the quaint old mansion Acton House formerly at the corner

of Churchfield Road and Horn Lane by the Nuns of the Visitation, exiled from France at the time of the French Revolution.

The modern history of Roman Catholic services in Acton begins with the establishment about the year 1878 of a resident priest by the celebrated Cardinal Manning. Father James O'Connell, a zealous Irishman, celebrated Mass for some short space in a private house in Churchfield Road; but soon found that, with the steady increase of the working population, it was necessary to put up a temporary iron Church in Strafford Road, South Acton. This he succeeded in doing; but after a most heroic struggle against illness, without quitting his labours until the end, he succumbed to lung disease and consumption. Father Biale, now of the Catholic Church, Clapton, followed him, labouring faithfully and providing the little iron church with some valuable furniture, including a set of brass sanctuary lamps, still in use in the permanent church. He was very popular, and made himself much beloved by the poor and the labouring classes. Since the coming of the present Rector, Father Biale has given some useful gifts to the mission, and was present at the laying of the corner stone of the present church by Cardinal Vaughan. His successor, Father Bradbee, in spite of delicate health, continued the work here zealously for some years and made a number of additions to the membership of the church. Since his retirement, owing to age and infirmity, he has taken a keen interest in the work carried on by Father Rivers, his immediate successor, and recently sent a substantial contribution to the building fund of the new church. This building, plain and simple in style, is an example of similar places of worship to be seen all over Italy and the Roman colonies in the South of France. It is purposed later to erect a Priest's house on the plot of ground adjoining.

This Roman Catholic Church of "Our Lady of Lourdes," High Street, was opened on the 28th of September, 1902. The design is the work of Mr. Goldie, of Kensington, and the style simple Romanesque, with aisles, transept, and apse, the seating accommodation being for over 500 persons. Not far from the

church, at Nos. 45 and 47, Avenue Road, the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent of Paul, have for some years conducted a Convent Day School for girls and young boys, presided over by the Superior of the Community. In the church the Stations of the Cross are in the old German wood-cut style, designed by the Benedictine Fathers of the Abbey of Maria Laach, and these, with the picture of Christ the Lamb of God as the Good Shepherd which covers the east wall of the transept, are noteworthy, the latter being attributed to Murillo. Another of the



*Photo :*

Roman Catholic Church, Acton.

*Parker.*



Photo:

Interior Roman Catholic Church.

Parker.

pictures contains a crown of real brilliants, and is a copy of the celebrated Byzantine Madonna in the pilgrimage church of Gennazano, near Rome, in possession of the Augustinian Fathers. The large rood in the centre of the Church was given to it as a memorial of the first resident priest in Acton (after it was made into a separate ecclesiastical district), Father James O'Connell, who here laid down his life in his efforts to found the church.

The Rev. C. E. Rivers, M.A., of Oriel College, Oxford, Diocesan Inspector of Schools for the Diocese of Westminster under Car-

dinal Vaughan, and also for some time past one of the University of Oxford's examiners on the local Examination Staff, has for nearly nineteen years been in charge in Acton—first in the temporary iron church formerly in Strafford Road, and since in the new church on the High Street. He was one of the contributors to the book, "Roads to Rome," published in the year 1901, and in the "Vicar of St. Lukes," a novel by Miss Sybil Creed, published a few years ago. Father Rivers is the original of the Catholic Priest, 'Father Stapleton,' and the suburb of London where he ministers, Fulfer Levet, is a thinly disguised description of South Acton from a careful study made on the spot by the authoress, a kinswoman of Father Rivers.

One of the centres of vigorous religious activity in our town is the Newton Avenue Baptist Church, which was first organized as an evangelistic mission. The members have been generally diligent and earnest in the propaganda of outdoor preaching, gospel meetings, temperance, and other work. The church membership was formed in May, 1895, while they were worshipping, under the ministry of the Rev. James Oatey, in the Acton Hall, Church Road. The erection of the building in Newton Avenue was then in progress, and the new chapel was opened in October of the same year. From October, 1894, until the end of July, 1895, Sunday morning services, school, and meetings throughout the week were held at the Acton Hall, while for the crowded Sunday evening services it was necessary to go to the Central Hall, Priory Schools. During August, September, and October, the latter Hall was used for all purposes. On the opening of the new building it soon became the centre of much useful work—the most notable feature during the early years being the open-air meetings. In April, 1900, after a pastorate of five years, Mr. Oatey resigned. He was succeeded in October of the same year by the Rev. F. T. Snell, from Canada. The period of his ministry was a brief one, and came to an end in May, 1902. In the following October the Rev. F. Martyn, of Northampton, accepted the pastorate, and the church, which had been in rather low water during the previous two years, became vigorous again. In April, 1907, Mr. Martyn resigned his ministry, and he ceased to act as Pastor in the following August.



From October, 1907, to April, 1910, the church was under the ministry of the Rev. Mark Wayne Williams, M.A., B.D., of the Christian Association, who left England for America soon afterwards owing to the continued illness of his wife. The building will seat about 650 worshippers. The Sunday School of the church has always been strong and flourishing. Mr. F. A. Everitt has been its Superintendent from the beginning of the work in October, 1894. The able organisation of an efficient band of teachers and officers has resulted in an excellent school, with a large and regular attendance. In the year 1904 a new schoolroom, with four classrooms on the first floor, was erected, and the cost (£450) was raised within a year.



Newton Avenue Baptist Church.

The Rev. J. Griffith Lloyd, who has recently received a call to this church, is now its Pastor. In addition to the other branches of work they have recently added a Newton Avenue Young Men's Own.

On opposite corners to Newton Avenue are two other places of worship: the Berrymead Rooms, where the Plymouth Brethren for a good many years have held their meetings, and carry on a children's Sunday School; and the Meeting House of the Society of Friends, who, a few years ago, acquired the villa house, formerly the residence of the late Mr. G. Bywaters, converting it into class-rooms for Adult School, children's, and other religious work; while in the rear a commodious iron Meeting House has been erected, in which free lectures have been



Friends' Meeting House, Avenue Road, Acton.

given for many years on Wednesday evenings. They are upon subjects of general interest, and have been largely participated in by the leading men of the town and neighbourhood. Here it is that the first Acton Adult School for Men assembles on Sunday morning, and the Women's School Sunday afternoon; and it is the centre of a good deal of Christian and philanthropic work, besides the regular meetings for worship of the Society of Friends. Interest attaches to the establishment of a meeting in this town, as it is recorded that the founder of the society here made a beginning of his work in the neighbourhood of London, to which reference has already been made. In addition to the above, active Sunday School and Band of Hope work are carried on.

'Active, earnest, homely, and practical' are words which may be used as descriptive of the remarkable and now national organisation known as the Adult School movement. But more vital and broader than even its outward practical form for effective work is the foundation of a pervading spirit of kindly, earnest co-operation, patient consideration, and brotherly esteem existing amongst all who are members of schools established and conducted upon true Adult School lines. This spirit, or atmosphere and power of the simple Gospel, unnarrowed and apart from sectarian influence, is the key to the remarkable force and vitality developed in this cause. Its spread over London, although not so rapid as in some large centres throughout the country, has, notwithstanding, already been notable. There are now a large number of Adult Schools scattered in different parts of London and the suburbs, and it can be safely said that each of these Schools is a centre of practical Christian work; and, in the opinion of many deep thinkers, of the greatest hopefulness as a means for reaching many of those who have not yet been brought into active connection with Christian organisations. One of the greatest results of the Adult School is its practical training of men, who learn things by doing them, and the equipment of earnest workers who find fields for service in all the various denominations in each neighbourhood in which such schools are placed.

The movement has now attained sufficient age and promise of permanence, as a means for elevating the life of the people, to make the origin and methods of operation of wide interest.

The question is frequently asked, 'how the Adult School Movement began?' A few particulars may be given.

London cannot claim the honour of starting this work, which now gathers between one and two hundred thousand men and women every Sunday for earnest Bible study. Great schools were already in existence in the Midlands and in the North of England, and their advocates had frequently urged their extension to London. It was objected that they would not suit the Metropolis, and could not succeed. Finally, one country School, not satisfied with this answer, urged the organisers of a London Night School for Working Men to send a deputation of their members to the large Adult Schools held in Hull. This was done, and on Sunday morning, the 11th of May, 1879, the first organised Adult School in London held its first meeting at Bunhill Fields. This has since become the parent of many other Schools in and around London. The early hour at which it gathered—eight o'clock on Sunday morning—separated it from any conflict with other religious engagements, and made it possible for the Adult School to be started on the broadest lines, and to be entirely unsectarian.

Its London pioneers of those early days resided in the North of London, and no trams running at that early hour, their attendance necessitated a walk of about seven miles into the City. It was not an easy undertaking; and before the movement was well under way it had involved some years of earnest effort. An iron building in Roscoe Street, Bunhill Fields, was the first home of the Schools. The neighbourhood was then a network of narrow courts and passages of the type of old "Chequer Alley." These have since been swept away to make room for the great blocks of Peabody Buildings. Whitecross Street alone remains, still bearing some of the features it had at that time. A few navvies, slaters, carpenters, labourers, a chimney sweep, and a few others made up the membership of the first School. The great principles of tolerance, mutual help, practical sympathy, and strong brotherly love which characterised this movement in the Midlands were likewise its foundation principles in London. Over thirty years had passed since the original founder, the large-hearted Quaker philanthropist, Joseph Sturge of Birmingham, who had been actively engaged in obtaining the abolition of negro slavery in the British Colonies, was touched by "the deplorable scenes observable in Birmingham on Sundays: unwashed laziness lounging in narrow streets and courts, troops of boys making mischief with trees, hedgerows and fences, or playing at 'pitch and toss' in the suburbs." The late Alderman White, ex-Mayor of Birmingham, who was himself one of the greatest Adult School advocates, and well merited the title of "Father of Adult Schools," wrote of Joseph Sturge: "Engaged in extensive commercial transactions, and leading an active business life, he was no sordid accumulator of wealth, but kept his heart and his purse alike open to the claims of suffering humanity—he was engaged in doing battle against the Corn Laws, the Navigation Laws, and other restrictions on the freedom of trade and commerce, which produced so much poverty and distress periodically among large masses of the population, who were consequently less well-fed and worse clothed and housed than at the present time." Joseph Sturge called a meeting at his own house on the 12th August, 1845, and a resolution was passed "that it was desirable that a School should be established, especially for those who have not been in the way of receiving instruction in other Schools." A School was started on Sunday evenings, and many of those who came were in the darkest ignorance, unable to tell the letters of the alphabet and destitute of moral or religious training. It was soon found, however, that the attendance fell off, and that Sunday evening was not a suitable time for holding the School. It was changed to half-past seven on Sunday morning, and the numbers soon began to increase. A similar result had been experienced with an early morning school held some years before for young men and women at the same hour in Nottingham.

These Adult Schools became known as "Early Morning Schools," and were

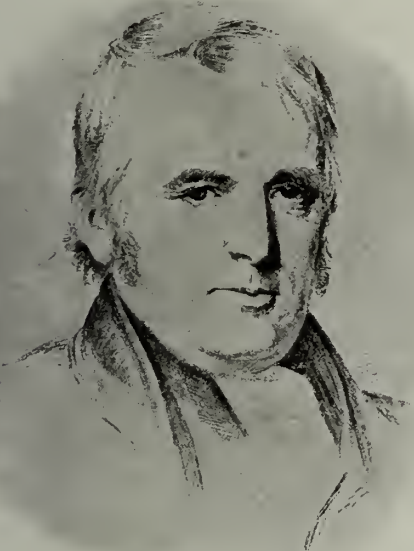


started in other great centres in the Midlands and in the North. The work in Birmingham far exceeded Joseph Sturge's anticipations, and before his death in 1859, he remarked, "I should not wonder if the School grows to be a thousand strong." Before the Adult School Jubilee, in 1895, over 40,000 Birmingham men alone had been early morning scholars.

As already noticed, it was many years before the work took root in London, but its steady persistent progress and extension over the Metropolis are evidence that its principles and methods, faithfully applied, offer a solution to some of the grave questions which present themselves to thoughtful minds in connection with the masses in the Metropolis and other great cities. The demand of men to-day is not, as many superficial observers suppose, simply for so much wages or such a share of the proceeds of his toil—although these are included—but for the larger recognition of the right claims of his life and of his part in our industrial and social world. How far the Adult School attempts, and succeeds in meeting these aspirations and desires, is well described by Dr. Horton, of Hampstead. He writes :

"It is very difficult to describe an Adult School. One must breathe its atmosphere and get the inspiration of its spirit to know what it is like. The moral effect of the close contact between educated and professional men, tradesmen and mechanics, employers and workmen of every calling, all meeting in common sympathy and with a united purpose, is very striking. Not less remarkable are the results in individual lives."

Looking nearly thirty-four years of continuous Adult School work in London, from amongst some hundreds of incidents which occur to the writer, one may help to illustrate its work : Here is the case of a better class artisan who was led to a School through the influence of a cripple. They stood together in a doorway taking shelter from the rain on Easter Monday, in 1882. The workman, bent on a day of pleasure, began grumbling about the weather. The kindly-faced cripple listened silently for a few minutes, then took the workman to task for his ingratitude to



Joseph Sturge, Philanthropist,  
Founder of Adult School movement.

God and the selfishness of his complaint. The rain ceased and they parted. Left alone, the artisan felt that he could not go and spend the day as he had intended, and the words of this cripple would keep repeating themselves in his mind. Instead of proceeding with his self-gratification, he returned to his wife, and spent a quiet thoughtful day at home. About this time it happened that two Adult School members were out one evening for their weekly "recruiting night." One of the houses they visited was the home of this man. They obtained his promise to come to the weekly Night School. He did so, and this led to his coming to the School on Sunday morning as well. Gradually the old unbelief gave way to earnest inquiry, and the few words spoken by the cripple soon bore blessed fruit—led to an open confession in a Mission Meeting, and his finding peace. Many years passed, in which he was a blessing to his own family and to others, and to-day his sons are bright earnest Christians. But the cripple never knew the effect of his words, nor the consistent devotion to his Lord of that workman, nor how many there were to whom he in turn gave help and comfort ; nor the brightness of his faith when,

thirteen years later, he lay on his death-bed, and said, "I am only waiting until He comes for me."

Perhaps the first man one may meet when visiting a School may once have been a sceptic, from whom formal separation from religious organisations had shut out most of the outward means of religious influence. He enters an Adult School, and finds an openness to listen to, and a tolerance with, the opinions of others; he has an opportunity to express his views; he feels the impress of truth, simple, direct and forceful, from the commonplace work-a-day life of those sitting about him; perhaps he never knows the day or the hour when a new life dawns and a new being begins within himself; but, as months pass, he is changed inwardly into a new man, and the veil is taken away, "with open face" and opened heart, "beholding as in a mirror," perhaps of some workmen's countenance, "the glory of the Lord," he is "changed into the same image."

When the first Adult School was started in Acton, on the 11th March, 1894,



Acton Adult School (Men's) 43, Avenue Road.

it introduced the movement to the most westerly point it had reached in the Metropolis. It was first held in one of the rooms of the Priory Board School. During the first years of an Adult School's life the growth is necessarily slow, if it is to be permanent. To this rule Acton was no exception. The inconvenience of having no public room for meetings during the week was much felt, and it was decided to remove to the house adjoining the present premises in Avenue Road. These premises were occupied for three years, when the work was removed to the new Friends' Meeting House, where there were convenient class-rooms and a commodious Hall for the assembled School. The opening exercises of the School generally include hymns and music; while sick benefit society, provident funds, library, and other school auxiliaries have attention. The chief time, however, is given to the Bible lesson. The "opening of the lesson" is not taken by the President, but by three appointed "openers." The object is to draw out the best



thoughts of each member and to open up conversation and questions which are likely to be mutually helpful. After the "openers," any member may speak or ask help in any difficulty he may have in connection with the subject. This lesson time is the most important of the School's exercises, and upon the maintenance of a high standard in its Bible lesson it depends for sound, vigorous and healthy growth. Membership is purely voluntary, and none are bound to subscribe to any creed, or accept any dogma, as a condition of membership. The government of the school is democratic. Officers and Committees are elected by the members at the School business meetings held periodically; and upon all matters of School policy the Executive Officers seek the support of the men before taking action. Members recognise that it is *their School*, and that they are responsible for its efficiency. It



Young Men's Own (Acton Adult School).

is financed by their voluntary contributions, so that in every way its success depends on the zeal of the whole body.

It might appear that men drawn from nearly all walks in life could have but little in common. Practically the reverse is true. The writer of "What is an Adult School?" from whom some extracts are made, says: "The same power holds their varied wills, and guides them into united action. Two mottoes, the first generally used by Men's Schools, 'Let brotherly love continue,' and the second, adopted by most Women's Schools, 'By love serve one another,' reveal the underlying principle of the whole movement."

And in these Schools men and women are endeavouring to make manifest and bring to fruition the love which they have realised in their own experience. All



may not have come to see and feel the full power of the supreme triumph of love in the sacrifice of Christ; but every true member is contributing his share, however rough and uncouth he may seem, toward helping his fellow men to live better and truer lives.

Although the Acton Schools have never grown great in numbers, they have not been without influence, nor wanting in their contribution to the improvement of our town. The Women's School, at Avenue Road, and the Young Men's Own, in the lower Acton Hall, are held at three o'clock in the afternoon. Since the Acton Men's School was started, fifteen others have been opened in this and surrounding districts. From these was formed the West London Adult School Association. All these schools, lectures, etc., are free, without any kind of fee or charge. Visitors are warmly welcomed at any time at any of their gatherings.

In the year 1902 the Adult School organised an Industrial and Loan Exhibition, which was highly successful, and in the opinion of old residents was one of the best



An Easter Gathering, Acton Adult School.

ever held in the town. It was opened by the Rector, the Rev. G. S. de Sausmarez, M.A., who spoke in warm praise of it, and called it creditable indeed to our industry in Acton. "He was proud to be connected with the exhibition because the proceeds were to be devoted to charitable objects—the Acton Cottage Hospital and Central Aid Society." Amongst a large collection of artistic and other articles was a model of St. Mary's Church with the old tower, made from the architect's design before it was re-built in 1865, by Mrs. Parry, wife of the late Right Rev. Edward Parry, D.D., Bishop of Dover, who was at that time Rector of Acton.

In closing this brief review of the religious life of Acton, it may be fairly acknowledged that there has been at least some approach to Christian unity in many directions; not because individuals have compromised their views, or made pretence of agreement about things in which there may exist wide differences, but because the spirit of Christ has called to united interest and participation in causes common to all, such as education, temperance, peace, and other kinds of social and religious service.

Educational.

V.

THE original thought or design of the writer, when this book was suggested some years ago, was the production of a short work in which several were to take part, setting forth the advantages of our town from the educational and other points of view. Although it was found impossible to carry out the original scheme, some portions of the letterpress and many of the illustrations were then prepared. A paper on the lines of the original proposal was received from the Rev. Wm. Bolton, M.A., giving a sketch of our educational work in Acton. It presents such an interesting and characteristic picture of the schools at that time that it is produced here without alteration, notwithstanding the many changes and the new schools erected in the interval :—

“The commencement of the modern development of Acton preceded by some ten years the comparatively recent advance towards national education. The village, with houses amidst large gardens and well-wooded parks, has been changing into the suburban town with rapidly increasing population, losing not a little of its rustic character in becoming both residential and industrial. The small public schools with buildings and apparatus and playgrounds, modern in style thirty years ago, and considered well adapted to the necessities of the time, have been supplemented by the larger and better equipped schools which the growth of population and development of thought alike demanded.

In the early seventies there were six public elementary schools in Acton: St. Mary's, in Oldham's Terrace, the Infant School hidden away behind the High Street, and approached by a narrow passage; the Schoolhouse for boys and girls, with a dwelling-house for the Head-master placed just before the land dips, the playground on the slope and continued by a triangular piece of garden wedged in behind Church Road; St. Dunstan's School on the east, close to one of the prettiest bits of Acton, where the wide roadway, with grass bordering and ancient trees and houses of varying degree, rich and poor, lying back within their gardens, looks as if it belonged to an older age; on the south, where the trade which hitherto has been distinctive of the town was being established, was the All Saints' School cramped by the side and behind the church, and soon to be found insufficient for the pressing needs of the place; in the Acton Green district was a fourth school, with one in Acton Lane belonging to the Roman Catholics; whilst in Gunnersbury Lane, where a Wesleyan Chapel had been built, a school formed part of the work of the Society, and completed the provision made. All schools were denominational.

There were indications of the development of the township which would soon necessitate larger accommodation for public school purposes. In 1875 the new Act was adopted and a School Board elected. The first meeting was held on December 30th, and the Rev. C. M. Harvey, the Rector of the Parish, was chosen Chairman; and he continued, until he left the town, to exert large influence upon the work, and to give unstinted energy to it. There were some conditions made at the time, notwithstanding some strenuous opposition, which have given a special character to Acton methods. The schools associated with the Church of England were rented by the Board for a few pence yearly, with the understanding that there should be a division of authority. The trustees had control until 9.45 in the morning, and during the threequarters of an hour after the opening of school gave what 'religious' teaching they desired. The Board then came into possession, and had authority until five o'clock in the afternoon; during these hours the schools were Public Elementary Schools in the ordinary sense of the term. The teachers were appointed by the Board. The plan has continued with but slight modifications to the present time, and although it may be open to criticism from some points of view, it has worked without practical injury and with a considerable amount of advantage.

But Acton was moving. The laundry trade was pressing westwards and settling down upon the southern section of the township. People were arriving for whose



children a larger school accommodation was necessary. The first building erected by the Board was for infants, in Osborne Road, and to that the department taught in All Saints' School was transferred in November, 1880. This has since been enlarged, and a large school for girls built, so that there is now accommodation for 1228 children. Round the large playground have been planted trees, which, in a few years, will make a spot of greenery and shade amid the crowded district. A plot of land within a few yards of this site has recently been purchased, and soon the scheme for this part of Acton will be completed by the building of a school for boys.

The next step in the progress of the building work of the Board, which has been

almost continuous for many years, was taken at the Priory, on a well chosen site in the midst of what has become a large population. The plan was for boys' and girls' departments with a Central Hall between them. This school was opened on March 5th, 1883. But a comparatively short time elapsed before it became necessary to obtain permission to use a portion of the Girls' Schools for infants, and then as a temporary measure to transfer them to the Central Hall. This was not a satisfactory arrangement, and was improved upon by the erection of a separate school for infants. All the buildings have been enlarged, parts of them more than once, and Board Room, Clerk's Offices, and Waiting Rooms added, the whole making a long and conspicuous range of buildings in Acton Lane, a little south of the High Street, with a school accommodation for 1642 children. Meanwhile the orchards and open spaces on the south of the North and South-Western Railway line were beginning to dis-



Rev. Prebendary Harvey, First Chairman Acton School Board.

appear, and houses were taking their place. After various and prolonged negotiations, and many disappointments, a good site was secured next to the Roman Catholic Schools in the Acton Green portion of Acton Lane. A large school was built with three departments. This also has been enlarged until there is now accommodation for 1626 children; yet the school is not large enough for the members who come to it from the continuously increasing district. The Board has already commenced the discussion of the provision of additional school buildings, which, if the purpose can be carried out, will meet the need of that part of Acton Green which is likely to avail itself of the Public Elementary School. [Rothschild Road and Southfield Road Schools have been added since.]

On the north side of the town the development has not been quite so rapid, although for some time there have been signs that extension here is necessary. The Wesleyan School became a Board School in January, 1895. The pressure of the numbers upon the space necessitated the removal of the school to temporary premises in the Churchfield Hall. After a long and tedious delay, part of the Derwentwater estate has been obtained for a Central School. To this the chief cookery and manual classes will be brought, and as advanced a curriculum as can be arranged under the Whitehall Code will, it is hoped, meet and satisfy the desire of many who wish for an education for their children, which, still being elementary, shall be planned upon wider lines than much of the past. [This Central School is described later.] The mention of one other school will complete the number of the Public Elementary Schools of the town. The northern border of the parish extends nearly to Willesden Junction. There there are houses, in their style and arrangement reminding one of a north country town, occupied by employes of the London and North-Western Railway Company, which it is difficult to believe belong to Acton. There has been for some years a temporary school, the place of which will probably soon be supplied by a permanent erection.

It is scarcely practicable to pay a visit to the schools; for if one be described, all ought to be so. There was an opportunity for a bird's-eye view of the whole in the Exhibition which, at the end of 1900, was arranged by the Board with the help of the teachers, and to which the parents and ratepayers were invited. The Central Hall was gay with decorations, and filled with exhibits representative of every branch of the school work. The walls were bright with pictures and diagrams, signs of the endeavour to make the class-rooms attractive, to fill them with sunshiny atmosphere, to provide the constant yet unrecognised teaching through the eye, which is received without weariness. There were specimens of the many forms of occupations in the Infants' Departments which with the pleasures of play combine the essential groundwork of education. The folded paper and plaited card and wound thread, twisted cane and moulded clay, and the elements of decorative brush work all indicated the methods by which the little ones learn about form and colour and number, neatness and precision; learn how to use their fingers and their minds. There was needlework, plain and fancy, of varying degrees of skill, as it came from the care of younger or older girls. Side by side with the more elaborate results were specimens of the humbler, but ever useful, patching and darning; evidence of the skill to mend the inevitable wear and tear of clothes. The Cookery Centre supplied a table with work done by the girls in this important branch of domestic life—work which has already proved itself of thorough practical value.

The boys were not a whit behind the infants and the girls. There were many illustrations of their capacity for elementary drawing, and from the Manual Centre an exhibition of the woodwork, which is not intended to make carpenters of the boys, but to give them knowledge of the simple use of tools, and to guide them in that training of hand and eye which will prove valuable to them whatever the course of their after life.

Nor do these things complete the illustration of school life given. Groups of children, from time to time, showed how admirably they can sing when well trained, and so far as the limited space would allow, there was just enough drill to remind us of the care for the physical condition of the children, without which the mental development is weakly unbalanced, and for that healthy discipline which is learned by orderly and combined movement.

The schools vary—necessarily so, when the different districts are considered,

and the various characteristics of those who have most to do with their daily internal working. But amid their variety is a unity of efficiency. They are well staffed and well appointed. Whilst extravagance has been avoided, needful expenditure has not been spared. The result has been that managers and teachers have been encouraged by the approval and commendation of H.M. Inspectors, as expressed in the whole series of recent reports. In a few of the departments the payment of fees is required ; the larger number are free.

In these public schools the children of the town can find a sound and good elementary education, teaching which will make a stable groundwork and discipline for all sides of life, which will set them in the way of a strong and worthy manhood and womanhood.



Rev. Wm. Bolton, M.A., late Chairman Acton School Board and first Chairman Acton Education Committee.

Until recently the provision for secondary education in Acton was represented by private schools for girls and for boys—some of them of considerable size, and planned by their principals with a view of meeting the requirements of modern life. Recently a large school for girls has been built by the Haberdashers' Company on the north-west side of the town, a district in which there are preparations for the development of large building schemes, which will occupy the open meadow land between Acton and Ealing. The provisions for this school come largely from the Aske bequest, which was originally invested by the Company in what was then rural Hoxton. The income of the trust increased until, in 1873, the Company was enabled to re-constitute the Foundation and to extend its educational advantages. Four public secondary schools were opened in 1875, two at Hoxton and two at Hatcham. Under a revised scheme in 1898, the former have been removed—the boys to West Hampstead and the girls to Acton. The management and equipment of the school, and the scheme of study, are thoroughly efficient and complete, and provide the opportunity

for parents who wish for a first-class public school education for their daughters.

For the boys the preparation is passing through its earlier stages. The Urban District Council of Acton has decided at a recent meeting to join with the Middlesex County Council in building and equipping a Secondary School for Boys.\* The intention of those who have been moving in this is that the school shall be conducted on efficient public school lines, with a standard of education which may be represented by the Matriculation Examination of the London University on the one hand, and the Examinations of the London Chamber of Commerce on the other. With such

[\* The County School, since erected, and described later.]





Rev. G. S. De Sausmarez, M.A.,  
Rector of Acton, and Chairman Acton Education Committee.

commercial, and domestic—and the fees are small. The object of these classes is to carry out a sound scheme of technical education, particularly adapted to meet the requirements of those engaged in the manual and industrial trades of the locality. Special attention is paid to artistic crafts. The provision of educational advantages is amongst the most important for the well-being of a town.

This brief sketch will have indicated that this has not been neglected in

advantages as these, there will not be in the future any reason for sending the children away from the town to schools in neighbouring districts, with the attendant drawbacks of the railway journey.

The form of education to which much attention has been given lately is that which is included in the wide term "Technical." This branch has not been neglected in Acton. The Acton and Chiswick Polytechnic of the Middlesex County Council, one of the best in the county, is on the south side of Bedford Park, in the Bath Road. Classes in connection with it are also held in the Priory Schools, Acton, and with these is now associated the Evening Continuation School, which for some seasons has been carried on by the School Board. [It is now under the County Council.] The various classes afford excellent opportunity for the extension of the school work of former years. The appreciation of this movement is increasing; year by year a large number of students attend the classes which are held in the day time as well as in the evening. The range of studies is large—technical, com-



Acton School Board Educational Exhibition, Central Hall, 1900.



St. Mary's Boys' and Girls' Schools.

Acton; indeed in its modern development it is one of its prominent features. The endeavour has been to keep the opportunities for education abreast of the diverse necessities of the rapidly increasing and very varied population."



St. Dunstan's School, East Acton.

The fact of its healthy situation upon a soil of sand and gravel, and its dry and bracing air, added to its excellent elementary, secondary, and technical schools has given Acton an advantageous position as an educational centre.

Bearing this in mind, and the importance educational facilities generally have for those about to choose a place of residence, it may be helpful to give in some detail further particulars of our schools:—First, St. Mary's at the foot of Oldham Terrace, one of the earliest in the district, is still doing useful work. The boys' and the girls' schools are separated by the house of the Headmaster of the Boys' School. They have accommodation for 164 boys (Mr. R. G. Essex, Headmaster) and 129 girls (Miss B. Bunker, Headmistress) and have always been fee-paying schools. They were generally very crowded until the opening of the larger schools.

A little to the north is situated the St. Mary's Infants' School. Although confined in space and working under other disabilities, it has been much used for



Priory Boys, 'Girls' and Infants' Schools.

very small children, and in summer, classes are held sometimes under the wide spreading branches of a tree in the centre of the playground. The Headmistress is Miss K. Blackmore.

St. Dunstan's is one of the smallest schools in the district, and has been for many years carried on as a Mixed School for boys, girls, and infants. Improvements have recently been made in the equipment of this school, under Miss M. A. Charlton, the former Headmistress. It is well organized and the work is carried on with brightness and vigour. The new Headmistress is Miss E. Stenning.

The Priory was one of the first large schools erected in the district and one of the first to be designed with class rooms surrounding a Central Hall. It lies between the railway and Acton Lane, with play grounds in the rear. There is accommodation for 610 boys under the care of the Headmaster Mr. Howard; for 542 girls





Classes in Priory Boys' School, Acton.

under Miss Wild as Headmistress, and for 477 infants under Mrs. Howard. It is the largest school under the Education Committee. There are favourable reports on the high state of efficiency reached and well maintained, the thorough teaching, producing first rate results; excellent physical and moral training, and well-nigh perfect discipline. These buildings are largely used for the evening classes under the Acton Technical Instruction Committee of the County Council. The Central Hall, which was the largest hall in town until the opening of the Public Baths, has for many years been much used for public meetings. The Board Room of the former School Boards and the Education Committee's offices were also here. Since the completion of the New Town Hall they have been removed there.

The second largest school of the district is situated at Beaumont Park, South Acton. It has had, perhaps for the longest period, the most favourable conditions as to bright, airy, and pleasant schoolrooms, but has been somewhat crippled in its



Beaumont Park Boys,' Girls' and Infants' Schools.

work through having no Central Hall in either of its three departments, for the assembling of the children. Exceedingly good work has been done at this school, and much interest and enthusiasm is manifested by the teachers in each of the departments: not only in the schemes of lessons but in the general conduct of the children attending the schools. The excellent feeling and spirit of co-operation which has existed between the Headmaster and Headmistresses and their assistant teachers, has pervaded the whole of these schools. There has been much to admire in the school discipline, fire drill, personal courtesy, and thoughtfully planned schemes of work, and in the way these have been carried out by Mr. D. Upton in the Boys' School, Mrs. Baker in the Girls' School and Miss M. Eyres in the Infants' School. The Boys' Department is reported as doing sound work;



Beaumont Park Girls' Swedish Drill.



Roman Catholic School, Acton Green.



that the elementary subjects, Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, are strong; that the boys are well behaved and responsive, and that there is abundant evidence of intelligent interest and well directed effort. Of the girls later report notes that the Head Teacher is unremitting in her endeavours to keep the school abreast of modern ideas and requirements. Sound organisation, thorough supervision, and skilful effective teaching alike contribute to its high measure of success. Mutual good feeling exists between staff and scholars and the consequent excellent behaviour, good manners and healthy working spirit, are conspicuous features of the school life. In the Infants' Department much excellent work has been done during the year: reading and writing are exceptionally good and much credit is due to the staff for their loyal and successful efforts to give life and variety to the training in spite of the obvious difficulties of accommodation.

The only Denominational School, carried on as such, within the district of Acton, is the Roman Catholic Mixed School, situated at the corner of Acton Lane



Rothschild's Road Mixed Schools (temporary School now re-placed by permanent School.)

directly adjoining Beaumont Park. Here some 300 children are being taught, and since the taking over of the school by the Local Education Authority there has been a decided advance in the keenness of the pupils and the brightness of the school, as well as a marked improvement in its equipment, staffing and in other directions. The late Headmaster, Mr. Glinnane, laboured zealously here, doing his best under rather adverse circumstances and shortness of accommodation. The present Headmaster is Mr. B. Hopper. The school is carried on by Managers representing the Trustees and the Local Education Committee.

The large population in the neighbourhood of Rothschild Road, and the difficulty and delay in procuring sites for new schools necessitated the erection of two iron buildings as Temporary Schools in the vicinity; one of these, with Departments for Boys and Girls was placed in the playgrounds of the Beaumont Park School, and the other upon the site for the new permanent school at Rothschild's Road. This site was only procured after very prolonged negotia-

tions. The need of accommodation was so urgent that it was imperative to provide for a considerable number of scholars at once, and the temporary school, erected as soon as the ground could be secured was more than justified, as it had to be declared full within eighteen months of its opening. Notwithstanding the special difficulties of organisation and the existence of excessively large classes, the school was reported as capably managed and the teachers doing well. It was successively under the care of Miss J. L. Blackmore and Miss A. Chamberlain, and there was the same excellent result in the educational work in this as in the other mixed schools and from the beginning a marked improvement in the conduct and character of the children. The new permanent school on this site has recently been erected. It is on the verandah principle with thorough ventilation and is arranged to accommodate 860 scholars. It was opened by Mrs. Leopold de Rothschild, 25th September, 1912. It consists of two departments, infants and junior mixed



Southfield Road Mixed School, Acton.

schools, on the ground floor only. Miss M. A. Charlton has been appointed as head mistress of the Junior Mixed School and Miss A. Chamberlain will continue as head of the Infants Department.

One of the recent schools erected to meet the pressing need of accommodation by the rapid development and filling up of the Bedford Park and Acton Green districts, is the handsome pile of buildings known as Southfield Road School. It is in three departments and is a Mixed School. Miss E. Dowling is at the head of the infants department. Reports describe this school as full of well directed and well controlled activity: the children are bright, happy and responsive. The material is good, for the children are well cared for at home, and the Head Mistress and her Staff have taken full advantage of their opportunities in every direction. In the Junior Mixed School under Mrs. C. Luckett, Head Mistress, the bearing of the children is smart and alert: their attitude towards their teachers and lessons



leaves little to be desired, while the readiness and good sense shown in oral response and the excellence of the written and manual work deserve great commendation. Equally gratifying is a recent report on the Senior Mixed School of which Mr. T. Franklin is Head Master. This School is providing a really excellent training for a number of industrious and well mannered children. The curriculum is comprehensive and the instruction most thorough and intelligent. As a result the children are keenly interested in their work and are most responsive and pleasant to deal with. The time and trouble cheerfully given by the Staff to promote games and sports have largely conduced to the success of the School.

Osborne Road, South Acton, is one of the most difficult districts in which to cope with the educational problem. The Girls' and Infants' School is on the south side of Osborne Road, and the playgrounds extend between this and Bollo Bridge Road. It has accommodation for five hundred and seventy-four girls.



Girls' and Infants' Schools, South Acton.

An exceedingly good work has been done in this School under Miss L. Jannaway in the Infants' School and Mrs. E. Huntley in the Girls' School. Already quite a transformation has been wrought in the neighbourhood, and although there are still many difficulties to face and overcome, excellent results must follow, and are already evident from the devoted work put into these Schools.

In the Infants School reports the scholars are described as bright, responsive, and happy, and their observation especially well trained. Their development, both physical and mental, as they pass from class to class is well maintained. In the Girls' School the needlework is specially commended. A suggestion is made that a library of good books would be of great value to the Schools. This department accommodates 618 infants.





Classes in South Acton Infants' School.



Rev. Canon Hindley, M.A.  
Formerly Vicar of All Saints.

of Manual work have been attended with marked success. This department is under Miss E. E. Bainbridge.

Nine years ago the site for a Boys' School was secured on the opposite side of the road to the Girls' School in Osborne Road, and during the succeeding year the new School buildings were opened. The Boys from the All Saints' Old School Rooms, which had become altogether too crowded and insufficient for the work and were without proper playgrounds, were transferred to this School. The new building is bright and attractive, and was the first School in which some features new to Acton were adopted. The classes that were temporarily held in the Free Methodist Iron Building, as an offshoot from All Saints, were also removed here, and a manual centre was established in a new building in the School grounds. Of the Junior Boys' the reports describe them as well behaved, industrious and intelligent; responding readily and sensibly to oral questions; while the quality of the written exercises is noted as exceptionally high and clearly pointing to persistent effort and unremitting care on the part of both teachers and children. The introduction of practical Arithmetic and the extension



South Acton Boys' School, Osborne Road.

Of the Senior Boys the report is that much sensible, steady work is got through and the boys' attainments are quite satisfactory. Conduct is very good, and written exercises are of good quality and neatly executed. The Head Master, Mr. H. Heaver and his staff have given devoted service to the boys of this neighbourhood. He was formerly Head Master of the All Saints' Schools before their removal to these new Buildings.

One of the recent Schools, carrying out the educational town plan of the last School Board, is erected on high ground near the once famous Acton Wells and has accommodation for 1124 scholars.



Class in Willesden Junction Temporary Mixed School.

Reference has already been made to the district at the extreme North East corner of Acton beside Willesden Junction. Admirable educational work was carried on here for a number of years in a temporary mixed school, under Mr. G. W. Syers, the present Head Master of the new Acton Wells School.

In connection with the Opening Mr. Steathfield, His Majesty's Inspector in charge of this district, wrote: "I should like to say that I have never looked forward to the future of any new school with greater confidence, because when a school has done such creditable work in very inferior premises, it stands to reason that it will do even better work in such an admirable home."



In later reports it is noted that the school has settled down comfortably in its new and highly commodious premises, upon the provision of which the Local Authority is much to be congratulated.

The former good standard of attainments is fully maintained, in spite of a considerable influx of children, and the usual co-operation between members of the staff and good understanding between teachers and scholars are as much in evidence as before, and materially conduce to the success of the School.

The tasteful decoration of the class rooms and the hall certainly merits mention, and the girls' flower gardens and the various incentives to industry and emulation are pleasing features of a happy school life.

And of the Infants' School, which is under Miss M. Jay the head mistress, it is said that this is an eminently bright and happy section, conducted with energy and ability upon modern lines. The large number of children of various ages admitted and the excessive size of the classes, have militated against uniformity of attainments, but the children are very responsive and intelligent, and show dexterity in many directions.

Here, too, the class rooms and hall are quite pictures of what School rooms should be.

The scheme for the Central School, which had been for a long time before the late School Board, was to make this a Higher Grade School. After overcoming many difficulties an excellent site was procured on the Derwentwater Estate. The



Acton Wells Mixed and Infants' School.



Central School, Acton.

buildings, opened in 1905, are well planned and amongst the most attractive Schools in the district or in the West of London. It has been found possible here to carry out to some extent the original plan of retaining some of the higher standards longer than they usually remain in other schools. As with all the new elementary schools of Acton this is a mixed school. There are three departments: the Senior for 497 scholars under Mr. E. J. Rayns; the Junior for 497 scholars under Miss M. Everitt; and the Infants for 410 under Mrs. P. C. Doe. Of the first of these it may be stated that it is most capably organised; the members of the Staff work indefatigably, and the children show industry, application and a pride in their School. The general standard of attainments is high, and the fact that a large number of children remain at the School after 14 and 15 years of age shows how much it is appreciated in the locality. Several athletic distinctions have been recorded, and redound to the credit of the School as a whole, and especially to the credit of members of the staff most intimately concerned.

The Junior claims equal commendation: able superintendence, earnest and intelligent teaching, excellent order, and industrious, well behaved children are conspicuous features of this school. Both written exercises and oral answering reach a high level of excellence.

The Infants have a very nice School, with bright, happy, natural children working in tastefully decorated rooms. The staff is very capable and the work is thoroughly good.

The Central School has an excellent cookery centre and well equipped chemical and physical laboratories. There is also a manual training building, ample open and covered playgrounds and covered accommodation for taking a class in the open air in the warm weather.

The first School Board for Acton was formed in the year 1875, and from that time forward, as already intimated, wiser counsels prevailed here in regard to educational matters than were perhaps always found throughout the country. It was felt by those who had previously carried on the local Voluntary Schools that the first consideration must be the matter of education itself; and with a true instinct in this direction, the Rev. C. M. Harvey, the Rector at that time, who was appointed Chairman, was instrumental in having the chief denominational schools, except the Roman Catholic School, placed practically under the full control of the School Board, the trustees receiving a nominal rent only for the school buildings and at the same time retaining the right in these Voluntary Schools to give denominational and religious teaching for the first half hour in the morning; the School Board itself taking full control thereafter, appointing and dismissing teachers



*Photo :*

*Wakefields, Chiswick and Brentford.*  
Central School Scholars' Coronation Gathering, 1911.

without regard to any denominational qualification. While this arrangement may not be ideal, and although with larger national recognition of the position which the education of children should occupy, and the provision which Government should make therefor, it may not present the permanent solution of a vexed question—it has, nevertheless, worked with very excellent results in this district, promoting a harmony in educational work much earlier and more fully than has obtained generally throughout the country. This arrangement made with the late School Board has been continued under the new authority with the result that Passive Resisters to the Act of 1902 have been comparatively few. When the last School Board was nearing the close of its existence, before the Act of 1902 came into operation, and the education authority was transferred to the District



Council, the Members of the late Board joined in presenting to their Chairman, the Rev. William Bolton, M.A., a portrait of himself, which was hung in the Board Room. This portrait was a companion picture to that of Rev. C. M. Harvey, M.A., the first Chairman, which was already on the Board Room walls. Throughout the years in which the last Acton School Board carried on the Educational work of the district, secured sites, prepared plans, or built new schools it was distinguished by much harmony and earnest devotion in the discharge of these important duties. Mr. F. A. Everitt,

who had been for many years one of its members, was selected to be the Secretary to the new Education Committee under the Urban District Council, and much assisted in carrying forward the work under the new authority. The Solicitor to the Board, Mr. Walter Adam Brown, was also retained by the Committee, as well as the Assistant Clerk, Mr. Potter. The greater portion of the Educational work of



A Peep from Mill Hill Road.



Last Acton School Board.

Acton was formerly provided by its School Board, and is now under the care of the Education Committee of the Urban District Council, on which most of the Members of the late Board served for a time. The Committee largely pursued the excellent scheme of Schools and work which the Board had in hand. In this connection extracts from the late Chairman, Mr. G. R. Parkinson's address at the opening of the Acton Wells School in December, 1909, on the position of Education in Acton may be given:—"The foresight of the old School Board and the Education Committees which succeeded it, planned out the erection of all the schools that have been erected up to the present with an accuracy that was unusual. At the present time the educational system was complete in Acton. They had excellent primary schools, housed in commodious and



Acton County School.

convenient buildings, and staffed with enthusiastic teachers. They had an efficient secondary school for boys, which they hoped, as time went on, to see filled with the clever boys from the elementary schools, who would receive there the training necessary to fit them for the university, the higher walks of commercial life, and the higher branches of the Civil Service. They had evening continuation schools in various parts of the district, into which they tried to get the boys and girls who left the elementary schools, and who did not go on to the secondary school. And then there was the Acton and Chiswick Polytechnic, where students of a more advanced age might obtain technical, artistic, and advanced commercial instruction. From an educational point of view, Acton was well equipped in itself, and this, in conjunction with its favourable position as a

residential district, made it a highly desirable place of residence for family men."

To the Urban District Council of Acton belongs the credit of having been the first to join with the County Council in the erection of a Secondary School in Middlesex. After the formation of preliminary Committees, a deputation from the District met the County Council, and a scheme was formulated; and later, an admirable site, known as the "Woodlands," comprising about six acres of beautifully wooded grounds of an old mansion, was secured. Four acres of this exceedingly interesting spot were devoted to the Secondary School and Boys' Playgrounds, while the remaining portion was dedicated as an open space for Public Park and Gardens. It is gratifying that this desirable and picturesque situation in the centre of the town was secured, as plans were already in progress for handing the site over to the builder, and for the removal of the fine old trees—ancient growths, very carefully selected and many of them hundreds of years old, which could never have been restored.

The main entrance to the County School is from the High Street, at which end the Caretaker's and Gatekeeper's Lodge is placed; while at the other end, upon Mill Hill Park, stands the School Gymnasium, the generous gift of Leopold de Rothschild, Esq.



The "Rothschild's" Gymnasium,  
Acton County Schools.

The southern approach is now through the newly opened Crown Street. The delightful situation of this School, the excellent equipment which has been provided in furnishing it—and by the generous gift of the Goldsmiths' Company of fittings and apparatus for the Chemical and Physical Laboratories—and its highly qualified staff of teachers and able Head Master, Mr. G. H. Clarke, M.A., have already made this one of the most popular and successful Schools in the London suburbs. A number of distinctions have already been gained by scholars, and the school is fast making for itself an excellent reputation.

It is for boys between the ages of ten and nineteen years of age, and is controlled by the Governors, seven of whom are appointed by the Middlesex County Council and six by the Acton District Council. Amongst the interesting old trees of the "Woodlands," now in the County School grounds, an ancient Spanish chestnut may be mentioned, which has peculiarly shaped limbs spreading out an immense distance, until they touch the ground, take root, and rise again in the form of younger growths of trees. Some of the lower limbs and unusual growths of this famous old tree had to be removed for the formation of roads and of the boundaries between the County School grounds and the Park.

As a result of the general awakening to the national need of education for all classes of children in properly equipped and publicly controlled Secondary Schools, the days of the indifferently staffed and often insanitary smaller private schools were numbered. One after another most of these began to decline or come to an end. Whilst much good work had been done in not a few of them, unquestionably this type of school existed long after they had become altogether insufficient and ineffective as a recognised system of education, and had failed



to meet the national need, or to offer facilities comparable to those of rival countries,—such as Germany and the United States,—or to those found in Scotland, or Canada and in other British Dominions over seas.

Amongst the private schools which carried on a portion of the educational work of the district in former years, was the Queen's College situated in well wooded grounds on the Hereford and Shalimer roads. This was at one time the largest Private School for Girls in Acton, and was long under the care of Mrs. Peace a much esteemed educationalist. On her retirement the school was closed. There still remain a number of private schools for girls in Acton. One of the Private Schools for Boys was the Springfield College, carried on by Dr. Weymouth, on Acton Hill, which was continued until a comparatively recent date. This has been closed and the building taken down. The Commercial College, situated nearly opposite the Public Library in the High Street, long carried on by the late Mr. E. C. Sunnuck, gave a thorough course in Commercial studies. It is now under



The Commercial College.

Mr. John Mackey, B.A., LL.D. The Acton Collegiate School of Mr. H. M. Coules, was once held in the famous and historic "Bank House," but is now carried on at Apsley Terrace, Horn Lane. It has also been successful in producing many scholars who have gained distinctions.

Acton's suitability, both as to situation and soil, for the establishment of large schools was recognised by the Governors of the new Haberdashers' School, in making their selection and placing the recently erected extensive School for Girls here. It is an imposing building, situated a little to the west of Springfield Park, and has accommodation for over five hundred girls. The original building was put up at a cost of about £30,000 under the Aske's Trust. It is fitted with a dining hall for Scholars who need to take their dinners at the School, has a good gymnasium, fine open playgrounds, and equipment for cookery and domestic

training. The School made excellent progress under the late Miss Miller, the first Head-mistress, whose lamented death took place not long after it was opened. Under her successor the present Head-mistress, Miss Margaret A. Gilliland, M.A. who was appointed in 1903, it soon became necessary to make an extension, and a new wing was added. The aim in this school is to give a thorough education to girls between the ages of eight and nineteen years. Besides taking the usual subjects of a Secondary School, all pupils go through a graduated course of housecraft. They are medically inspected by the School Medical Officer on entering, and thereafter annually.

Girls take the London Matriculation and Intermediate Arts and Science Examinations, and those who show special aptitude for the work are prepared for Scholarships at the Universities. Pupils who reach a satisfactory standard



Haberdashers' Aske's Secondary School for Girls, Acton.

in general education, and whose abilities lie in this direction, are allowed to enter for a special course of secretarial and business training in commercial subjects, French and German, shorthand and typewriting, economic and industrial history, geography, etc.

Haberdashers' Exhibitions, not exceeding £40 a year, are tenable at the schools of the Foundation. The Exhibitions are intended for the education and maintenance of children and grandchildren of Freemen of the Company of Haberdashers. Leaving Exhibitions of from £30 to £80 a year, to be held at any place of higher education or professional training, are awarded to pupils who show marked ability, provided they have been more than three years at the School. The Old Girls' Club meets at the School three times a year.



The School has a large playground, asphalt tennis courts, and gardens. Games are actively encouraged. There is a Literary Society and Nature Study Club, each with a membership of about 100. This School has already been very successful and is steadily advancing in popular appreciation.

In regard to technical education, although this district was not the earliest in the Middlesex area in taking up this branch, excellent progress has been made during recent years. The Acton and Chiswick Polytechnic, situated at Bedford Park, has become the largest Institution of the kind within the County.

The original building was erected for the late "Chiswick School of Art," in 1881, from plans by Mr. Maurice B. Adams, F.R.I.B.A. The work was



*Photo]*

Ancient Spanish Chestnut, Acton County School.

*[Green.*

restricted for some years to the teaching of pure and applied Art, but subsequently a portion of the premises was occupied by the Chiswick Art Workers' Guild.

The land and buildings of this School of Art, which was one of the original buildings in this "Garden City,"—as it was then called,—was purchased by the Middlesex County Council in 1899, and, after necessary alterations, repairs, and re-decorating, in September of that year the Polytechnic was opened for the purpose of carrying out a sound scheme of Technical Education particularly adapted to meet the requirements of those engaged in the manual and industrial trades of the locality. In addition to the almost nominal fees paid by the



Students and the grant received from the Board of Education, the Institute and its Branch Classes are maintained by grants from the Middlesex County Council.

The Polytechnic soon became an assured success, and, to meet its immediate requirements, an addition was put up at the rear. Toward the cost of this a considerable sum was raised by local subscriptions. The subsequent rapid growth of the work and demands for fresh classes, however, quickly rendered even this accommodation insufficient, and plans were prepared for further extensive additions. As soon as the usual proportion—one-third—of the necessary funds was provided by the two adjoining Districts, the last new buildings were erected. These contain a fine assembly hall, commodious class-rooms, and other needed accommodation. Mr. and Mrs. Leopold de Rothschild kindly consented to open the new buildings, which ceremony took place on the 24th September, 1908, when he gave an able address, full of practical and helpful suggestions.

From its inception the Polytechnic has owed much to the Secretary of the Education Committee of the County Council, Mr. B. S. Gott, who, for some time acted as Directing Secretary, until the appointment of Mr. W. H. Barker, B.Sc., the first Secretary of the Institution to devote his whole time to it. Under Mr. Barker the attendance was greatly increased, and the work of the Institution was



Acton and Chiswick Polytechnic.

much extended and consolidated before his removal to become the Principal of the East Ham Technical College. The Committee was very fortunate in obtaining an excellent successor in Mr. V. C. Egerton, the present able and valued Secretary whose devotion and ability have contributed to continued steady growth and efficiency in this work.

The number of individual students admitted to the Classes at the Polytechnic and the Branch Classes at the Priory Schools, Acton, which began with 685 at the former in the year 1899, and with 173 at the latter in 1900, and, some years later, in 1909, with 172 at the Chiswick Branch, have grown to the following numbers for the present year: At the Polytechnic, 1711; at the branch classes at Acton, 360: and at Chiswick, 211; making a total for the whole, excluding the Trade School, of 2282 individual students, representing a most satisfactory and steady development.



Life Room, Acton and Chiswick Polytechnic.

With the two substantial additions to its structure, it now ranks amongst the more important technical institutes in the metropolitan area. A few words, by way of general description, may help those who have not visited this busy centre to more fully understand this part of the Educational work going on in our midst. It is well worthy of a visit.

On entering the building one is struck by the well lighted and handsome hall, bearing on its walls large plaster casts of portions of the famous Parthenon Frieze. Commodious class-rooms are on either side of the Hall, and in close proximity are two excellent Workshops used for Carpentry Work, Bookbinding, and Enamelling. Adjoining is a spacious Lecture Hall, containing, amongst a loan collection of valuable pictures, a very fine portrait of the late Chairman of



the Committee, Mr. Benjamin Hardy, painted by a student in the School of Art. Facing this is a large Silver Challenge Shield, presented by several well known residents of the District in celebration of the Coronation of the late King Edward VII., and competed for annually by the local Rifle Clubs. It was executed entirely in the workshops of the Polytechnic from the original design of a student. Proceeding to the workshop set apart for Plumbers' Work and Metal Work, we find some excellent specimens of joining, bossing, and lead-burning, together with a number of examples of the Repoussé Workers' Craft. Before leaving the ground floor a visit should be paid to the busy Electrical Laboratory, to inspect the elaborate machinery it contains, including Motor Generators, Dynamos, Gas Engine, etc. Here the engineers and appren-



Art Room, Acton and Chiswick Polytechnic.

tices employed in the Local Tramways Depot, on the District Railway, and in the numerous Engineering Works of the District, receive Technical Training. In the basement, close to the up-to-date heating chamber, is a small workshop used for testing purposes in connection with the Motor Car Engineering Class, containing a quantity of motor parts presented by one of the large Motor Car Works for which Acton is now becoming famous.

On reaching the first floor of the new building, we find it contains a large Engineering Drawing Office, Science Laboratory and Balance Room, and two class-rooms for Commercial subjects,—Classes in Modern languages forming an important feature. Passing through to the first floor of the original



School of Art we come to the large Antique Room, a spacious and lofty compartment with a dome-shaped roof, with numerous life-sized figures, etc. This room is lighted by large incandescent burners, which give a strong, steady, and concentrated light, adopted after numerous experiments with all types of gas and electric fittings. The Life Drawing and Modelling work of the School is executed in two well equipped rooms, which, like the Antique Room, are furnished with a good north light.

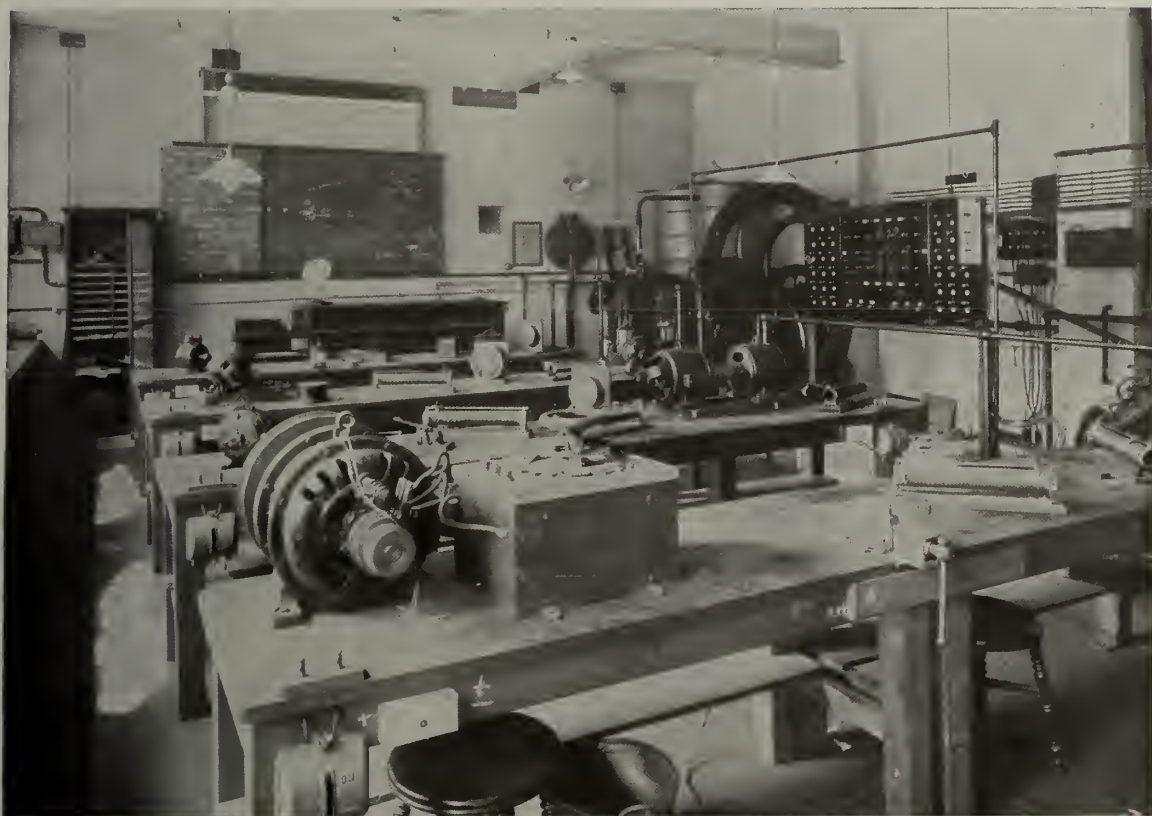
Before concluding, a visit should be made to the top floor of the new buildings. Leaving the splendid Architectural Hall, used exclusively for classes connected with the building trades (such as Building Construction, Architecture and Architectural Design), we find that the Domestic side of the Polytechnic work is well provided for. There is a large kitchen, equipped with every convenience for Cookery, and a large room adjoining is set aside for classes in Art Needlework, Dressmaking, Home Nursing, Domestic Hygiene and Millinery. Visitors can see from a cursory glance at the Prospectus, which is found on the table in the Enquiry Office, that the County Local Technical Committee have arranged their scheme



Bookbinding, Acton and Chiswick Polytechnic.

to suit the requirements of the large industrial firms of the District. Those who wish to fit themselves for Commercial and Business life will also find that they are amply provided for, and the necessity for a tedious journey to evening classes held at a London Institution, is now a thing of the past.

For a time a Pupil Teachers' centre was held at the Polytechnic before the erection of the New County School at Southall, to which the centre was afterwards removed. Another departure which has been made by the County Education Committee has been the establishment of a Day Preparatory Trade School for



Electrical Laboratory, Acton and Chiswick Polytechnic.

boys, at the Polytechnic, the first of its kind in the county of Middlesex. The object is to provide an organised course of preparatory practical instruction for boys who desire to enter the engineering, building, or allied trades, and who wish eventually to become skilled craftsmen. It was opened in September, 1910, having at the beginning 38 boys, of whom 15 had obtained Middlesex County Council Scholarships; at the close of the first year there were 48 boys in attendance, and the school had proved a distinct success. The curriculum was based on the idea of a two years' course; but a third year has since been added, and commenced this September, for which about forty per cent. of the present



A corner of the Carpentering Shop.

scholars have elected to remain. Already employers are giving a preference to Trade School boys. The inauguration of this school marked a fresh development, inasmuch as it is the first whole time day school of technological character in Middlesex. There are only a limited number of them yet throughout the Kingdom, and both this and the trade school for girls at Willesden are in the nature of an experiment and a beginning.

In the first year specialisation is not aimed at. All boys take a general course, the principles of which are the fundamentals of all mechanical trades. This enables those in charge of the boys to form some idea of the "bent" of

each one of them. The parents are then consulted, and, where necessary, advice is given as to the course which could best be followed in the two remaining years. In the second year the thin end of the wedge is started for the trade the boy proposes to follow. He drops those subjects which are irrelevant, and spends more time on those which are associated with his trade. The third year is to be spent almost entirely on those subjects which are directly connected with his trade. By this means the boy gets a fuller insight into workshop practice and theory, than he would if his three years were spent on trade work alone, and he has, in addition, a wider outlook on the world in general.

Some of the results of the practical instruction were to be seen in the Exhibition of work of the Polytechnic, which, in the opinion of the inspectors, included surprisingly good contributions from the boys' Day Preparatory Trade School. Mr. Max Tagg, F.R.Met.Soc., is the headmaster.

The importance attaching to the attainment of some exercise and proficiency in practical work before the end of the period of school life is at last coming to be recognised. As a writer says: "All authorities are agreed that where skill and dexterity of hand are required, as well as brain activity, the vocation training should commence before, or early in the years of adolescence, for it is then that the motor centres of the brain are most active." Nor is it alone for the trades, crafts, and arts that this is desirable. The manhood of the country makes its claim for an extension of the period in which the school life may be carried on, and that it may, in many cases, be broken by periods of practical work, preferably undertaken in the country. Under our present system, with its age limit, many scholars, who develop slowly, are only awakening to their best application when their school life must end. Were it possible to have subsequently, even short periods of instruction, following practical application, much of the expenditure on education that now in part fails to produce the equipped and efficient worker or thinker would provide many more of each of these.

The Evening Classes held under the local Technical Committee at the Priory, Central, and County Schools, are at present the best available means supplying a remedy for this deficiency in our educational system. On the whole Acton is well to the front in the matter of technical education.



# County and Municipal.

## VI.



*Photo ]*

*[Elliott and Fry.*

His Grace the Duke of Bedford, K.G.,  
Custos Rotulorum and  
Lord Lieutenant of the County of Middlesex.



Mr. County Alderman William Regester, J.P.  
Chairman Middlesex County Council.

Walker V. A.D. 1623." Beneath this inscription is a tablet setting forth that the wall was re-built in 1831.

The present Lord Lieutenant, the representative of the King in the County of Middlesex, is his Grace the Duke of Bedford. William Russell, the first Duke, was made Lord Lieutenant of Middlesex on the 3rd of February, 1693. Neither a description of the historical nor of the modern County of Middlesex formed a part of the original plan of this work. In view, however, of the ever-increasing closeness of the relations between the County and its component districts, and the mutual desire to promote in the most effective and economical way the many and varied interests common to all, and also in view of the difficulty of describing the district without some allusion to the county, it has seemed desirable to include a few pages containing a brief statement of some outstanding features of Middlesex at the present time. The laying of the founda-

REFERENCE has already been made in the historical section to the first Earl of Bedford and the Russell family, and to their early connection with Acton and Chiswick. To Francis the fourth Earl is due, in great part, the reclaiming of the large tract of marshy country amounting to about 450,000 acres, known as the "Fens" and now called after him the "Bedford Level." This tract of marsh had since about the Thirteenth Century been a pestilential swamp, owing to the incursions of the sea from the "Wash." He also took an interest in parochial affairs at Chiswick, as is evident from the following inscription on the outside of the wall of the Churchyard: "This wall was made at ye charges of ye Right Honourable and truelie pious Lorde Francis Russell Duke of Bedford, out of true zeale and care for ye keeping of this churchyard and ye wardrobe of Godds Saints whose bodies lay therein buried from violating by swine and other prophanations. So witnesseth William



Mr. County Alderman Henry Burt, J.P.,  
Vice-Chairman County Council.

tion stone of the new County Buildings at Westminster presents a suitable point, and the Chairman's remarks appropriate matter for opening this sketch.

It was on the 2nd of May, 1912, that his Grace the Duke of Bedford, K.G., the Lord Lieutenant, "Well and truly" laid the stone, in the presence of a considerable company of County Councillors and Justices, when the chair was occupied by William Regester, Esq., J.P., the esteemed Chairman of the County Council. Alderman Regester said:—"It is my duty to say something to-day about the site upon which we are now gathered and the building which we propose to erect upon it. With regard to the site, I am sure that all we Middlesex men congratulate ourselves upon the possession of it; and my gratification is not lessened by the knowledge I have that in the apportionment between London and Middlesex which took place a good many years ago, I took some small part in the negotiations which led to our possession of this site. There was a question at that time between two Sessions Houses, one was at Clerkenwell and the other was at Westminster. Happily we were able to arrange that London should go to Clerkenwell and Middlesex to Westminster, and if we had not been able to arrange that, all through the years that have passed since then, Middlesex would have been meeting at Clerkenwell instead of at Westminster.

Then there is one other point about the site. I do not want to deal at length with its antiquity, but there is one curious antithesis which I think I must allude to. When we were making the excavations for this building, we came, to the surprise of the architect, upon a mass of Kentish rag stone, hard cemented, and to remove it (and being not antiquarians but men of business, we had to remove it), that solid mass had to be blasted by dynamite. I am afraid the County will have some reason to regret, pecuniarily, that it happened to be there; and I have received one or two complaints from neighbours around us that their nerves were shattered and their windows broken by the necessary



The New Guildhall, Westminster—Laying of Foundation Stone.

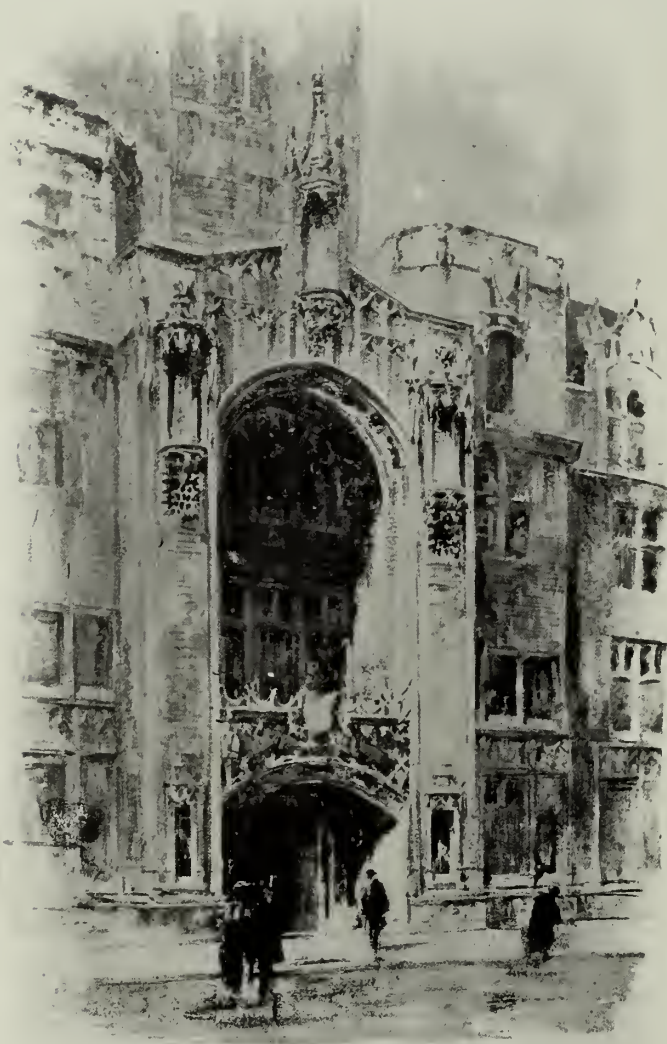


process. But it is a site which I think we all recognise to be the finest in London, and what I was going to say was this: that that solid mass constituted the foundation of a building known as St. Peter's Sanctuary; which was erected about the time of the Norman Conquest, and which served as a city of refuge for criminal and dissolute characters who desired to escape from punishment for their crimes. That went on for 500 years, until the time of the Reformation; and the building was pulled down I believe at the latter end of the Eighteenth Century, and evidently upon the same site--without doubt upon the same site, I think, owing to what we have now discovered--was erected our old Guildhall; and

whereas in the old days criminals and dissolute characters, in the phrase of the time, 'took Westminster,' in order to evade justice, for the last 140 years criminals and dissolute characters have been brought to Westminster, not to evade justice, but to receive the punishment which was due to them for their offences; and it is a very odd contrast which I think points to a great advance in the civilisation of our country.

My own first acquaintance with this site was in the early part of the year 1899, when, in what was known as the First Court, the first County Council of Middlesex met for the first time to transact business. Of the 78 men who met there then, seven working members of the County Council still remain. They are Lord Jersey, Mr. Montagu Sharpe, Mr. de Wette,\* Mr. Bigwood, Colonel Bowles, Mr. George Wright, and myself.

When one remembers the comparatively unimportant body which we, the County Council, considered ourselves then, and the enormous amount of work which has been thrown upon us since, I do think that the change is simply marvellous. At



The New Guildhall Entrance.

\* Alderman de Wette, who was Chairman of the Asylums Committee, has since died.

that time the County staff was represented by Sir Richard Nicholson, the Clerk of the Peace, who became, also, *ipso facto*, the Clerk of the County Council. There was Mr. Austin, his deputy, and there were two assistants. At the present time we have Mr. Austin, the Clerk of the Peace and the Clerk of the County, Mr. Hart Deputy Clerk; Mr. Rattenbury Chief Accountant; we have the County Engineer, Mr. Wakelam; the Director of Education, Mr. Gott; the Medical Officer, Dr. Young, and we have to provide accommodation for about 100 members of their staff; 100 members who control, outside the building which we are about



Middlesex New Guildhall, Westminster.

to erect, somewhere between 3,000 and 4,000 employees engaged in doing the work of the County Council of Middlesex in the County.

Gentlemen, at that time the population of Middlesex was under half a million, and the rateable value was under £3,000,000. At the present time the population of Middlesex is nearly a million and a quarter. Think of it—a million and a quarter. We have seven representatives in Parliament for that million and a quarter, and although I would not for the world use one word which could possibly be considered political to-day, I suggest that we are nearly one-third of the population of Ireland; we have seven representatives, and they have, I think it is, 103. Gentlemen, I hope that that is a condition of things,



Photo [Elliott and Fry.  
Mr. County Alderman George Wright, J.P.



Mr. County Councillor William King Baker  
(Acton, North).

whichever party may be in power, which will not last very much longer; for I confess that as a Middlesex man, interested in Middlesex as I am, I never think of the grievous injustice which is being done to Middlesex in this respect without a boiling up of wrathful indignation in my soul.

Gentlemen, the work of the Justices has increased since 1889 very largely. There were in the year 1889-90 eleven sittings of Quarter Sessions and 94 prisoners.



Photo] [Upjohn.  
Mr. County Alderman Alexander  
Robertson.



Photo] [Wakefield.  
Mr. County Councillor W. Eydmann,  
Junr. (Acton, South).

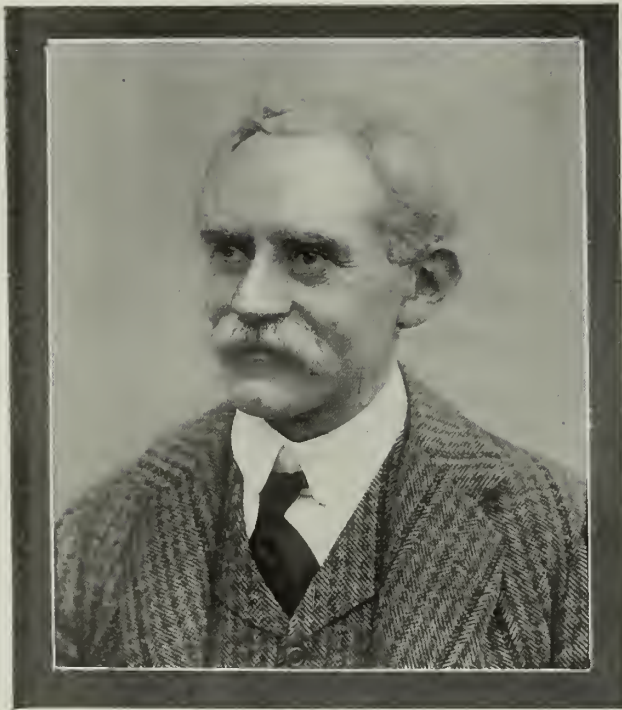


MAP  
of the County of  
MIDDLESEX.



An old map of Middlesex, including area separated to the County of London.





Mr. County Alderman Colonel Henry F. Bowles, J.P.,  
Late Warden of the Goldsmiths' Company.  
Chairman County Education Committee.

became absolutely necessary to provide further accommodation. We were fortunate enough to be able to acquire the site of the National Society's premises. The County did that wisely, as I think, some years ago, and that extra site has enabled

In 1911 there were 29 sittings and 319 prisoners. But whereas the work of the Justices has increased very largely, the work of the County Council has increased by leaps and bounds. Not only have we to deal with lunatics, as we had at the beginning, and with main roads—I think we have spent on main roads since that time something like a couple of millions of money—but also we have spent about a couple of millions on tramways; we have about 40,000 children in our elementary schools, and 6,000 or 7,000 in our secondary schools; we have to carry out the Small Holdings Act, the Shops Act, the Diseases of Animals Act, and we have to look after Open Spaces, the licensing of music halls and cinematograph shows, and to carry out innumerable other duties with which I will not trouble you just now. But the outcome of it all is that the accommodation which we had was absolutely inadequate for the purposes of the County, and it



Mr. Benjamin S. Gott, M.A.,  
Director of Education, Middlesex.



Mr. H. T. Wakelam, M.I.C.E.,  
County Engineer and Surveyor.

us to erect this building now. There were certain circumstances with regard to the diversion of a road, and so on, about which I need not detain you.

Now, I have dealt with the past of the County for 25 years. He would be a rash man, I think, who undertook to prophesy what the future of Middlesex during the next 25 years is likely to be, but I hope that we have provided, or are going to provide here, accommodation which will be suitable not only for the present needs of Middlesex, but for the needs of Middlesex for a good many years to come. I have said, I do not know what the future of Middlesex is going to be. There may be differences sometimes between the County and some of the larger constituents of it, but I think we are able to settle our own differences, and we are Middlesex men and I hope we shall always remain so.

I am told that the architect has designed two symbolical figures to guard the portals of the main entrance of the building; one will represent Justice and the other, Prudence. I have not seen the design of the architect, but I remember being remarkably struck a great many years ago in Venice by a beautiful figure of Justice by Giotto. The figure was represented holding the scales, not by the beam, but one scale in each hand, and I think that the sculptor intended to show that the equality of Justice was not a question of the natural law of balance, but



Mr. Walter George Austin,  
Clerk of the Peace and Clerk of the County Council.



Mr. C. W. F. Young, M.D., D.P.H.,  
County Medical Officer of Health.



Mr. R. A. Robinson,  
Chief of Weights and Measures Staff.





Mr. County Alderman Montagu Sharpe, J.P.,  
Chairman Court of Quarter Sessions.

I hope that that is the sort of prudence which in our new Council Chamber the County Council of Middlesex will ever exercise, so that the elected representatives of the people may spend the money of the people for the benefit of the people for all time wisely in Middlesex.

I do not think I need say any more except this, that I hope, whether it be for the purposes of the administration of justice or for the purposes of the administration of County affairs, there will ever be found a body of men in the future as there has been in the past, willing to work for the County with that civic spirit, that spirit of local self-government which has been for long generations past, and, may I hope, through the ages to come continue to be one of the proudest attributes of the English race."

that it was dispensed by the weighing of the pros and cons of each individual case by Justice herself. I believe that that is the idea of Justice which prevails among the Justices of Middlesex at the present time.

With regard to the other figure, the figure of Prudence, surely at the present time there is no quality which is more necessary, and I might add sometimes, alas, more forgotten, than the exercise of prudence in the administration of County affairs. I do not want to be misunderstood. By prudence, I do not mean that narrow, small-mindedness which refuses to expend money however necessary it may be, but the wider prudence which Ruskin has defined as Forethought and as a wise anticipation of the needs of the people in the time to come.



Mr. County Alderman Herbert Nield, M.P.,  
Deputy Chairman Court of Quarter Sessions.

In the course of an address, Mr. Montagu Sharpe, Chairman of the Middlesex Quarter Sessions, said:—"It seems to me that the laying of the foundation stone of this joint habitation in a way symbolises that unity of spirit and good feeling which has always existed between the two bodies administering the affairs of Middlesex. Each of them has its own particular sphere of duty: the County Council administering to the County needs of the ratepayers, and the Justices doing their duty in protecting the property and the persons of the inhabitants. At last we are going to have a beautiful building worthy of a great County. This County, as you know, is a distinct entity which has existed for 1,025 years, and it is only right and proper that we should have a building worthy of our needs and for the carrying out of our



Photo]

R. O. Davies, Esq., J.P. (Webster Bros.

respective duties.]

Our County, besides being ancient, has always been the Metropolitan one, and if I may say so, has almost had a royal birth, for did it not come into existence owing to the dissensions of two Kings.

Speaking on behalf of the Magistrates I would just like to give a few particulars to show how necessary it was that the accommodation on the Justices' side should also be increased. When we came here in 1889 there were just over 100 Magistrates who were residing within the County. Of course, as you know, there were, besides, a large number of gentlemen in the Commission for Middlesex who were then residing in London. At the present time we have 195 resident Justices and 151 living outside the County, making a total of 346,



Photo]

Percy Barlow, Esq., J.P. (Elliott and Fry.







Acton Court House.

ventilated waiting rooms, &c. But the irony of the whole thing is this, that while the innocent public, who have to pay for the administration of justice, prosecutors and witnesses have suffered much inconvenience, the prisoners were being well looked after by the Home Office. I can assure you that their cells had to be made exactly in accordance with the Home Office rules, so that each prisoner should have the regulation amount of air space

and room in his cell. I am quite sure that in the Guildhall which is now being erected, we shall no longer suffer from any inconvenience, and I venture to say that the two Courts—the First Court, and the Second Court over which the Deputy Chairman so ably presides—will afford ample accommodation for all.”

After an interesting speech by Mr. Carlyon, Chairman of the Standing Joint Committee, which he described as “the third County Authority which a wise and far-seeing legislature has devised for the purpose of acting as a sort of go-between and general bond of union between the other two great Authorities,” his Grace the Duke of Bedford said: “The work of local administration has enormously increased; it has widened its area and it has incurred much graver responsibilities, and we shall want this new building for the accommodation of all its varied and increased activities, but at the same time a great sense of public duty has grown up and has accompanied the increased growth of public business. I am confident that the increasing sense of public duty will keep pace with the growth



Opening of County Tramway Acton to Willesden.

of public business and manage to meet the demand upon the time and energy of County Councillors and Magistrates. I am confident that the concurrent growth will continue, and that in future we shall find that the work is carried on, no matter though the sacrifices demanded have greatly increased. After all, it is upon a great sense of public duty that local administration must depend alike for the respect in which it is held, for the success which it may achieve, and for the authority which it maintains."

Mr. Herbert Nield, M.P. made reference to the immense amount of work that Mr. Regester has done for the County, and the wise decision made in clearing the ground instead of leaving a quarter of the old building "to disfigure one of the finest sites in Europe." He also gave reminiscences of the late Chairman Sir Ralph Littler, who first of all saw the necessity for acquiring the additional premises on which the new Guildhall is being built.

At the time of the passing of the Local Government Act, 1888, the Guildhall, Westminster, was a building of one storey nearly 100 years old, and was erected for the purposes of a Sessions House. The accommodation in the building soon became inadequate for the requirements of the Quarter Sessions and the County Council, and in 1892 the old Guildhall was altered and enlarged. The recently acquired premises lately occupied by the National Society, the commanding position of the late Guildhall itself and the former road between the two sites now form one enlarged site upon which the new Guildhall is in course of erection. It is faced with Portland stone, and of some architectural merit, designed to harmonise with the buildings in the locality and to be worthy of the site. The cost is expected to be between £70,000 and £80,000 and it is to be completed about June, 1913.

According to the statistics of Public Elementary Schools for the year 1902-3, published by the Board of Education, there were in the Elementary Education County 31 Council and 67 Non-Provided Schools, providing accommodation for 34,433 children, with a number on the rolls of 31,302. On the 30th June, 1911, there were 57 Council and 63 Non-Provided Schools, providing accommodation for 44,683 children.

A few further figures may give in condensed form a more definite view of the Middlesex of to-day. The population of the County, as shown by the 1911 Census, was 1,126,465. The area of the County, in acres, is 148,701, and the number of persons, per acre, is, therefore, 7'6. The present assessable value for general County purposes is £7,036,897, and for the purposes of elementary education, £1,995,073. The autonomous areas which became Local Education Authorities under the Act of 1902 are not included in the last named figures. The assessable value for general County purposes which as shown was nearly three millions in the year 1889 has more than doubled, being over seven millions at the present time. The rates levied since the County Council came into existence have also risen from 5d. in 1889 to 10½d. for 1912-1913, in addition to which are the Higher Education rate of 1½d. throughout the County, and a rate of 9¼d. for Elementary Education in the County Council Elementary Education area.

The income of the County Council is chiefly received from rates and imperial funds. The rates and special contributions from parishes for education purposes levied for the year ended March, 1912, produced £461,931, and the receipts from imperial funds amounted to £171,409, which included £133,649 for Grants in aid of higher and elementary Education.\* The other receipts of the County for this year amounted to £129,333—of which £71,168 4s. od. represents the net rent of the Middlesex Light Railways paid by the lessee Company.

The Revenue expenditure for the corresponding year for interest on and repayment of general loans, the maintenance of main roads—including subsidized roads and bridges, expenditure in connection with the administration of justice, salaries and establishment charges, lunatics and lunatic asylums, registration of electors and legal and parliamentary expenses, expenses in connection

\* The grants for Higher Education were much greater this year as they included arrears for previous years in respect of Customs and Excise Duties.

with County Buildings and Reformatories, Diseases of Animals Act (1894), cost of collection of Local Taxation Licences, and other payments amounted to £350,246. To this must be added elementary education—including interest on and repayment of loans £174,190 and similar charges for higher education amounting to £121,749, making a total of £646,185.

In addition to the above expenditure, the County Council, during the year, paid the usual Grants out of the Exchequer Contribution Account. This is the Account to which are carried the Grants from the Imperial Exchequer in respect of Local Taxation Licences and Estate Duty, and the amounts received from the Postmaster-General—being proceeds of the Local Taxation Licences collected by the County Council under Section 6 of the Finance Act, 1908.

To this Account is also carried the amount received from the Exchequer in respect of Customs and Excise Duties.

The Grant in respect of the last mentioned Duties is now a fixed one and must, under the Education Act, 1902, be used solely for the purpose of Higher Education. The income of this exchequer contribution account, excluding the Grant in respect of Customs and Excise Duties in 1899 amounted to £118,203 8s. 5d., and had increased at the end of 1912, the



The Old Guildhall, Westminster—Erected for a Sessions House.



The Old Guildhall-Hall, as altered 1892—now pulled down.

last completed year, to £136,207 10s. 8d. The expenditure under the same account, which includes, deductions made by the Local Government Board in respect of Metropolitan Police and revising barristers, grants paid by the County Council for public vaccinators, teachers in poor law schools, registrars of births and deaths, pauper lunatics, union officers, medical officers of health and inspectors of nuisances, county lunatics, and other charges, formerly left a substantial surplus. In the year 1900 the surplus on this Account amounted to £20,734 11s. 10d., which was transferred to the County Fund in aid of the Rate. In the years 1909, 1910 and 1911, the deficiency on the account amounted to £29,137 16s. 3d., £23,372 14s. 0d. and £36,819 2s. 6d. respectively. It will, therefore, be seen that whereas in 1900 the surplus on the account was the means of relieving the County Rate to the extent of about 1d. in the pound, for the years 1909, 1910 and 1911 it was necessary to raise a rate averaging approximately, 1d. in the pound to meet the deficiency on the account. The effect is that in a period of ten years, the deficiency on Exchequer Contributions has been responsible for an increase in the County Rate of 2d. in the pound.\* In reference to the deficiency of the Grants from the Imperial Exchequer, several applications have been made to successive Chancellors to receive deputations on the subject from

\* In July, 1911, intimation was given to the County Council by the Local Government Board to the effect that the Law Officers of the Crown had advised that the payments by the County Council out of the Account should not exceed the amount received from Grants. For the year ended 31st March, 1912, the County Council abated the claims to come within the amount received. If this had not been done the County Council would have had to meet a deficiency of £38,764 15s. 1d.



the County Council, but hitherto without avail. The present Chancellor of the Exchequer has, however, appointed a Committee to inquire into the changes which have taken place in the relations between Imperial and Local Taxation since the report of the Royal Commission in 1901, with a view to the introduction of legislation at an early date. It is understood that this Committee is now preparing its report.

The Capital Expenditure of the County Council is incurred chiefly under the headings of: Main Roads, £290,811; Lunatic Asylums, £792,405; Light Railways, £1,790,473; and Education, £531,653.

With regard to Light Railways, the total length of railways authorised and constructed is over 43 miles. Under the Agreements with the Lessees, the Metropolitan Electric Tramways, Ltd., the County Council provides the track and sub-structure, and pays for all the necessary street improvements and widenings; and the Company erects the necessary buildings and provides the plant and rolling stock. The net revenue of the light railways and tramways, after charging all the usual running and administrative expenses and interest on expenditures by both the County Council and the Company, and providing for reconstruction and renewals, is divided between the County Council and the Company,—45 per cent. to the former and 55 per cent. to the latter. The amount received by the County Council for interest on expenditure and share of net revenue for the year ended December, 1911, was £71,168 4s. od. This was after providing a sum of £27,170 for reconstruction and renewals.

The outstanding debt of the County Council, as at 31st March, 1912, was £3,617,031, or the sum of £3 4s. 3d. per head of the population.

At the time of the passing of the Education Act, in 1902, and the handing over of the control of secondary education to the County there were within its area, three Grammar Schools for Boys, the Isleworth County School, and the Hornsey Stationers' School; the Drapers' School for Girls at Tottenham and the Aske's School at Acton. The buildings of the three Grammar Schools and of the Isleworth County School were inadequate or in a very bad condition, and the numbers in attendance not at all large. These four schools have been re-built, the Stationers' School has been enlarged, the Drapers' School for Girls has been taken over by the County, and nineteen other Secondary Schools have been either erected or opened in buildings purchased or rented. These provisions now fairly cover the different parts of the County, and most of the Schools are practically full. The expenditure already incurred is considerably over £300,000, and when the scheme suggested and approved of by the Committee in 1907 is completed, the total capital expenditure will be not far short of £400,000. In addition to the Acton and Chiswick Polytechnic, already described, there are two other large Polytechnics, seven Technical Institutes, and a number of Art Schools within the County, while several of the County Schools have been partly erected for Technical purposes. There are also some six hundred Scholarships now awarded under the new County scheme.

The records of the Petty Sessional Court at Acton bear testimony almost every month to another branch of the County's activity. This is the work of the Inspectors of Weights and Measures, &c., who are constantly giving attention that bread, coal, etc., are of the proper weight; milk, butter, and other foods not adulterated; and that the weights and scales used by tradesmen are correct. Oversight is also exercised in connection with Explosives, Registry Offices for the engagement of Domestic Servants, and other matters.

The large variety of interests now embraced in County work necessarily involves much delegation of same to Committees; but space will not allow further detailed reference to the work of Highways, Small Holdings, Parks and open spaces, Licences, Asylums, Reformatory, Parliamentary, and other County activities. Nor is it desirable to further extend statistical particulars which are subject to constant change. A few historical references however may be made. First as to light railways: when these were first under consideration,

great difficulties were being experienced by the County Council in protecting the interests of the County in connection with numerous schemes which were being promoted by companies for the construction of light railways and tramways in the County. Eventually the Parliamentary Committee of the County Council came to the conclusion that, in the interests of the County, it was necessary that the promotion of private schemes by companies, which made no provision for widened roads, should be stopped, and that the County Council should itself formulate a scheme which would give the public all the advantages of tramways and light railways, and at the same time secure to the County the retention of its control of the roads, provide for the widening of the roads



In the Grounds of Springfield House.

where required, and enable the County to share in the profits of the undertaking. Already the south western portion of the County was largely in the possession of the London United Tramway Company. The County Council decided in February 1899 to avail itself of the provisions of the Light Railway Act 1896. Attempted conferences with the London County Council to co-operate in the schemes to be promoted and as to the points at which to make junctions followed, but were not successful, although Middlesex has been from the first willing to arrange as to the interchange of traffic and making physical connections: these are now however in some measure about to be realised.



Haymaking in Acton.

The first steps were taken in the promotion of Middlesex lines, a number of routes were projected and an agreement was made with the Metropolitan Electric Tramways Ltd. for the leasing and working of the Council's Light Railways. In March 1901 a Light Railways and Tramways Committee was appointed, and the Council decided that all roads on which light railways were constructed should be widened to fifty feet where possible, except in the case of bridges or where the widening would be prohibitive. The cost of the widenings is made part of the capital cost of the light railways, whereby the full measure of the obligations incurred by the construction of light railways can always be readily ascertained. This differs from the course adopted in the case of some similar undertakings outside the County, where the widenings are treated as highway improvements, and fall wholly or partly on the County rate and not on the Tramway Fund. The figures already given show the mileage and some of the results of working. The income should be very largely increased as physical connections are made with London, and open cars and trailers are adopted to suit that large section of the community which would use them for pleasure



Springfield House, Acton.





Apple Gathering in Acton.

traffic through the day, but would not require means of transit to and from business. The arrangement of circular or alternative routes would further promote this traffic. Acton District Council was one of the first to support the County representatives in connection with the county promotion of light railways; and was not a little affected by the cutting short of the projected line through to Chiswick and the river. By an agreement in 1901 made by the County with the United Tramways Company, the Company agreed not to promote or support, either directly or indirectly, any application to authorise the construction of any light railway or tramway in the portions of the county north of a line of demarcation running east and west and dividing the county into two sections at points north of Acton, the canal and the Uxbridge Road—the Acton tramway itself extending below this line being made an exception to this general division of spheres.

Under the Local Government Acts of 1888 and 1894, County Councils were made central supervising health authorities within the areas of administrative counties, and to give effect to this they were given various powers and duties in connection with the supervision of the sanitary administration and the



Springfield House from the Garden.



Springfield Cottage and Blake's Field.

Hospitals Acts, the Midwives Act, the Housing and Town Planning Acts and the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act.

The work carried out by the Public Health Department under the control of the Public Health and Housing Committee of the County Council is partly of a supervisory and consultative character and partly administrative, and as indicative of the complex conditions in Middlesex and the need of an organising centre, it may be pointed out that there are at present 37 sanitary districts, of which two are municipal boroughs, four are rural districts and the remainder urban areas.

Under the Insurance Act in Middlesex 319,676 have become insured persons, and 534 doctors have joined the panel. Five chief tuberculosis officers have been appointed, and the county has been divided into five principal areas for tubercular treatment.

enforcement of certain duties by the local authorities, viz., Borough Councils, Urban and Rural District Councils. With a view to exercising this supervision and to bring about uniformity, co-ordination and co-operation in the public health administration of a county area, a County Council was given the power of appointing a County Medical Officer in order to advise them on matters relating to the health of the community resident in their areas, to investigate any condition prejudicially affecting, or likely to affect the public health, and to consult with and advise local medical officers of health in matters of difficulty.

Since the dates mentioned above, further Acts relating to the public health have been passed, giving additional powers and duties to County Councils, the most important of which are the Isolation



Upper Portion of Stamford Brook.



In carrying out the supervisory work the County Medical Officer visits the various districts in the County as occasion arises, and in company with the local Medical Officers of Health makes inspections, giving any necessary advice and if required supporting the local authority in any action. To make available to the district Medical Officers of Health information concerning the presence of disease in parts of the County adjoining their own districts the County Council made arrangements whereby the County Medical Officer compiled weekly lists of infectious disease for circulation to each district. Similar arrangements as to cases of consumption were in force previous to the introduction of compulsory notification. Each year an annual report reviewing the vital statistics and sanitary administration in the County as a whole and in the separate districts is drawn up and circulated.

The administrative work of the department comprises the following:— The exercise under the Midwives Act of general supervision and control over all midwives practising in the area to see they carry out the rules laid down by the Central Midwives Board and are provided with proper antiseptics, and maintain in satisfactory condition the necessary appliances; the investigation of charges of malpractice, negligence or misconduct, and the suspension from practice when needful, of any midwife. At the present time the number of midwives who



"The Elms" Pond, Acton Hill, now filled up.



Horn Lane in Flood.





Baxter's House and High Street before the making of Crown Street.

have notified the County Council of Middlesex of their intention to practise, is 287, and for the purpose of carrying out the work of inspecting the midwives, their appliances and mode of practice, a lady inspector, who is a qualified midwife has been appointed to assist the County Medical Officer.

Under the Isolation Hospitals Acts the County Council have power of forming hospital areas and establishing isolation hospitals where necessary. This has been done in the case of four sanitary districts. Under the Housing and Town Planning Act the County Council have power, on complaint made, to act in default of a rural district council, if after inquiry they are satisfied that the local authority has failed to provide working class dwellings where there is need of them.



The Steyne, Acton, in Winter.

By the passing of the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act, 1907, the duty of the medical inspection of children in the public elementary schools in the area under their control was placed upon the County Council. In order to carry out this duty the County Medical Officer was appointed School Medical Officer to organise and supervise the work, and two medical men, afterwards increased to three, were appointed as assistants under him to make the routine inspections. At a later date a School Nurse was also appointed. This work was commenced in April 1908, and the number of children medically inspected since then has been as follows:—1908 (9 months) 6611; 1909, 14,850; 1910, 15,951; 1911, 11,083. The details of these inspections and the results of the "following up" by means of re-inspection, are fully set out in the annual reports of the School Medical Officer and may be seen at the County Council offices.

Space will not permit further references to Middlesex or to its early records, although from the time of the Catuvellauni, from its naming after the Middle Saxons, and its assessment under the Domesday geld book, at two shillings on



Photo]

Mr. Councillor W. J. Boissonnade, J.P. [Hoffman  
Chairman Acton Urban District Council.

Mr. E. Monson, J.P., F.R.I.B.A.

PAST  
CHAIRMEN OF  
THE  
ACTON  
URBAN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL.



Mr. T. H. Morris.



Photo Mr. A. W. W. King, J.P. Hoffmann.



Photo] Mr. E. F. Hunt. Hoffmann.

PAST  
CHAIRMEN OF  
THE  
ACTON



Photo Mr. Councillor R. Poulton, J.P. Haynes.



Mr. F. A. Baldwin.



Mr. W. J. Amherst.

URBAN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL.



the hide (of about 120 acres), to the present time, it has been full of interest and has shared with the Metropolis in the great events of the nation's history.

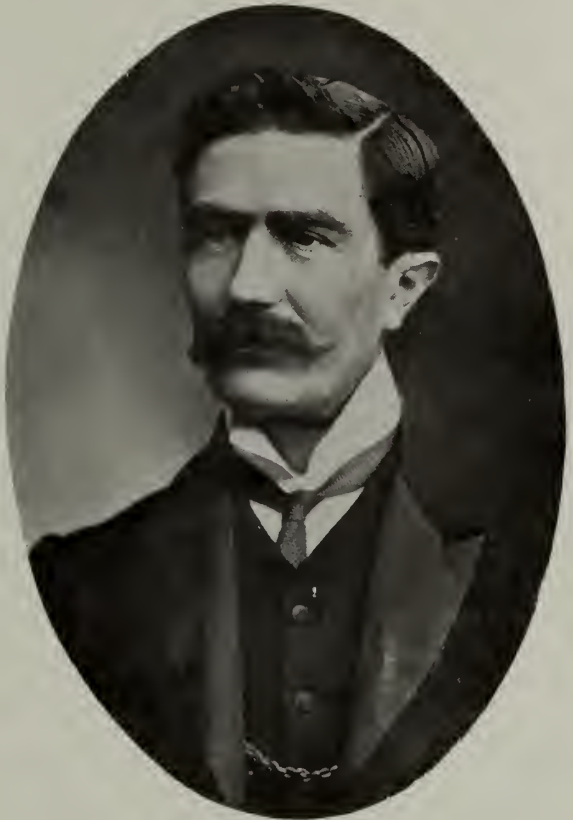
In the early part of last century the great high road out of London into the West Country, after descending Notting Hill and passing Shepherd's Bush, crossed a stretch of open level country that led to a long sloping hill before it entered the little village of Acton.

Situated on a commanding elevation overlooking the valley of the Thames, and about two miles distant from the river, its Parish Church and quaint old houses were very conspicuous and could be seen many miles round. To the south-west of the village, Gunnersbury House was situated, and its Park sloped gradually away toward Brentford, the old county town, located at the point where the River Brent empties into the Thames. North of the village were other great houses, and near by the once famous Mineral Springs which had attracted numbers of fashionable visitors from the Metropolis. Acton was, however, too near London to retain permanently its fame as a health resort. It is matter of surprise however that notwithstanding its fine situation, the gravelly and sandy soil underlying most of it, and its remarkable healthfulness, the town for a longer period than almost any place near to London retained all the characteristics of its ancient village life, and continued to have but a comparatively small number of inhabitants.

By the return of the population made to the House of Commons in the year 1801 Acton contained 241 inhabited houses, occupied by 303 families. There were 15 uninhabited houses. The population consisted of 724 males and 701 females. Those engaged in agriculture are given as 215, and those in "trade manufactures or handicraft" as 141. Not included in these lists were 1069 making the total number of persons 1425.

From these figures it was evidently, at that time, chiefly a place of residence. By the year 1861 the population had grown to 3151, and in 1871 to 8306. It is of interest to note that the recent census gave the number of inhabitants as 57,000 and at the present time there are probably 60,000. The forty years which intervene have increased the numbers of 1871 about seven-fold.

The emergence of our town from its old village life may perhaps be fixed a few years earlier than the last named date. The minute which records the first attempt made to obtain a popularly elected body to administer the various powers in connection with the local government in the parish of Acton runs as follows:—



Mr. Councillor A. C. Crane,  
*Chairman during the year of the  
Coronation of His Majesty King George V.*

CHIEF  
OFFICIALS  
OF THE  
ACTON  
URBAN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL.



Mr. F. A. Everitt.  
*Organising Secretary,  
Education Department*  
*Photo Naudin.*



Mr. F. Sadler,  
C.E., F.G.S.  
*Engineer and Surveyor.*  
*Photo Gant.*



Mr. W. Hodson,  
F.C.I.S.  
*Clerk to the Council.*  
*Photo Haynes.*



Mr. S. Lord, A.S.A.A.  
*Accountant and Superintendent.*  
*Photo Lock & Whitfield.*



Dr. D. J. Thomas.  
*Medical Officer of Health.*  
*Photo Hoffman.*

" At a Meeting held on the 5th day of October, 1865 in the National School Room, in the parish of Acton, in the County of Middlesex, in pursuance of a Summons of the Churchwardens by public notice and advertisement, upon the requisition of upwards of twenty Ratepayers and Owners of Property in the said parish, addressed to Messrs. Robert Stanley Mansel and Simeon Wright, Churchwardens of the said parish, requiring them to summon a meeting for the purpose of considering, and if agreed to, of passing a Resolution to adopt the Local Government Act, 1858, within the limits of the said parish of Acton."



*Photo]* Mr. C. F. Rochester, [Gearing.  
Librarian Acton Public Library.

It was thereat by resolution decided to adopt the Act, but a poll being demanded this was accordingly carried out when out of a total number of 514 who voted, there was "a majority in favour of the adoption of the Act, within the limits of the Parish of Acton" of 228.

The Local Board subsequently elected consisted of twelve members, and held its first meeting at the National Schools, Acton, on the 13th of March, 1866. Shortly afterwards it rented a house in the High Street near to the Police Station at twenty-five pounds per annum, which served as the offices of this body until the year 1871 when the population having increased to 8306, a new building was erected and occupied by the Board. This afterwards became the home of the

District Council and was used by it until the completion and occupation of the new Municipal Buildings last year. It was under the Act of 1894 that Acton became an Urban District. On the roll of Chairmen of the earlier Authority, the Local Board

of Health, from 1866 to 1895 we find the names of Messrs. R. S. Mansel, R. Attenborough, F. Hamilton, G. F. Fry, Rev. C. M. Harvey, Dr. H. B. Lingham, Messrs. W. Roebuck, A. Hubbard, H. W. Blake, and G. Wright. The last named County Alderman G. Wright, who was the last Chairman of the Local Board became the first Chairman of the New District Council.

When it was constituted, the number of Representatives was increased to fifteen, elected every three years, all the Members going out of office at the same time. The District was divided into three wards, the North ward having seven Members, the West ward four, and the East ward four.

The old Local Board Building situated just below the hill on which the Parish Church stands was continued as headquarters of the District Council, although it soon became altogether inadequate, and before the District Council removed to the new Council Buildings part of its Offices were necessarily located in other buildings: the Rate collecting department was removed to the top of Mill Hill Grove, the electricity Offices to Churchfield Road, while the Surveyor's Department had to be



*Photo.]* [Gunn and Nowell.  
Miss Councillor S. M. Smee.



removed to a temporary building at the corner of the site secured for the new public buildings. The old building, erected by consent of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and which was sold last year, stands in the position where formerly stood the ancient pound for the retention of stray cattle; while close beside it the small watercourse formerly Stamford Brook from Horn Lane crossed the High Street. Although no longer visible at this point, in times of pressure or flood it is still of use.

In the possession of the District Council is an old parish Surveyor's "Rigester Book," dating from 1775 to the end of 1811, and bearing the signature, at the beginning, of Thos. Aldridge, Vestry Clerk, 1759. Some of its entries are of interest

Acton Middlesex The Inhabitants Names  
And the Account of the Composition  
Money's To be Paid by them In Lieu of  
their Statute Duty As was to be Done by  
them towards the Amending of the High way  
In the Said Parish of Acton In the County  
of Middlesex for the Service of the year  
1775  
Ezekiel Timberlake  
And  
Tho: Bramley Sur<sup>r</sup>  
Surveyors

First Entry in old Surveyor's Book, Acton, 1775 to 1811.

on account of the names which appear, as of those assessed or with whom transactions are recorded. The "Right Hon. Earl of Donegell" is assessed, evidently on one hundred and fifty pounds value, the sum of £5 8s. to be paid in the year 1777. The rate of a man's wages seems to have been eighteen pence a day, and there are many entries at this rate for work done in "Norwood Lane,"—a name which has evidently disappeared; other entries are given "Jan. 20th 1775 To one day a labourer to arch and spreading Grevile 1/6"; "1797 Expenses going to Hampstead after the man that broke the cams head and wall down by the old alms house, 4/-." A reproduction is given of a page Jan. 22nd 1777, about which time appear the

Acton Middlesex January 22: 1777  
 At the Parish Meeting Held In Vestry, Loggia Room  
 And held in the Parish Church of Acton aforesaid  
 Having Read and Perused the aforesaid  
 Accounts of Mr Thos Bramley Surveyor of the  
 High Ways of the Parish of Acton in the County  
 of Middlesex: for part of the Year 1775 and  
 part of the Year 1776 (Ending Sept 22: 1776  
 And do find the said Surveyor Oweth to the  
 Parish in the Sum of: Two Pounds Three  
 Shillings And Tenpence And to allow of  
 And pay the same As witness our Hands  
 The Day And Year first Above written

present in Vestry

Thos. Salt } Church

Thos. Briggs } Wardens

Wm. Cook }  
 Wm. Locke }  
 Thos. Collett }

Immanuel Timothy

Wm. Church

Joseph Aldridge

Rich. Horst  
 H. Hatton

names of Thomas Briggs, Stephen Briggs and Wm. Church, each as Surveyors of Highways. The last entry is: "Acton, December third 1811 These accounts were examined and allowed upon the Oaths of Samuel Owen and Robert Bagshaw the Surveyors. G. S. Wegg." An original printed letter in an old frame, on the back of which is the signature "Jno. Aldridge, Acton, 1787," in the same hand-writing that appears where he signs in the Surveyor's book, is now in the possession of Mr. R. W. Harper, of King's Bench Walk, Temple, and reads as follows:—

"To the MINISTER, CHURCH WARDENS, PARISH and PEACE OFFICERS of  
the parish of ACTON. GENTLEMEN,

HIS Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the County of Middlesex, having received from the Grand Jury at their last General Session of the Peace held at



The old Local Board and late District Council Building.

Clerkenwell on Thursday May the twenty-fourth 1787 a Representation of divers Irregularities and Enormities, which call for the active Exertions of the Majistrates and Parish Officers, and a more vigorous Execution of the Laws; And it being their earnest wish that the good Purposes of the said Representation should be carried into Effect; They have thought proper to transmit the same together with the very respectable Names thereto subscribed, to the several Parishes in this Country; And that the Laws respecting the several Matters complained of may be generally





In front of old Council Building foot of Acton Hill.

*Photo:*

*Wakefield, Chiswick & Brentford.*



Opening of the King George V. Garden adjoining the New Municipal Buildings.

known, they have subjoined Extracts from such of them as relate to the same, hoping that the Parish Officers and principal inhabitants will exert themselves to see that the said Laws be fully carried into Execution in Matters of so much Consequence to the good Order as well as to the Happiness of the People.

The Majistrates think it their Duty to recommend it to every Parish to pay a particular Attention to that Part of the Representation which respects the Profanation of the Lord's Day, the Disorders committed in Alehouses, and the great Increase in the number of Vagrants, as the most important and effectual steps towards putting a Stop to the Evils complained of.—I am, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient

Humble Servant,

Session House for Middlesex.

HENRY COLLINGWOOD SELBY,

19th June, 1787.

Clerk of the Peace for the County of Middlesex.

P.S. It is requested that a Vestry be called on the first Sunday or other Convenient Day after the receipt of this Letter, to consider what Steps are most proper to be taken in the Business above-mentioned."

But to return once more to modern Acton, the large increase in population and the widely extended requirements in almost every direction caused by the



*Photo]*

*[Wakefield, Chiswick & Brentford.*  
High Street, Acton, West of the Public Library.

town's rapid growth, made large demands upon the time, devotion and judgment of the new Council; and, taking into consideration how little preparation had previously been made for these new needs, it cannot be denied that, by the Council, as well as by the local Education authorities a great deal has been done, without, on the whole, making as large an increase in rates as might, under the circumstances, have been reasonably expected. It was for some time generally acknowledged that the business of the Council had grown so much that there should have been an increase in the number of its members. Only the want of suitable accommodation for Meetings of a larger Council hindered earlier efforts being made to this end. The provision of Municipal Offices engaged the attention of the Council for a considerable period; the necessary land was acquired in the High Street near the Public Library, and plans were prepared for both Town Hall and Buildings for the Public Offices.

Before the matter was finally settled, however, there was considerable agitation in the town.



In the scheme ultimately adopted, the site directly facing the High Street was not built on, and the erection of any large public hall was left until the demand for such further provision in the neighbourhood should be made more urgently manifest. Some further details may be of local interest and are extracted from the particulars supplied by the architects Messrs. Raffles and Gridley of 10 Grays Inn Square, W.C. for the opening proceedings.

The land on which the new Buildings are erected once belonged to the old Priory and forms part of a large plot bounded by the High Street, Winchester Street, Salisbury Street, and Acton Lane. It was acquired by the Council some years ago and on part of it they had already erected the Public Baths. The local Police Court and the Public Library, standing upon opposite corners, the completion of the new buildings, bringing together under one roof the Clerks', Surveyor's,



New Municipal Buildings, Acton.

Accountant's, Public Health, and Education Departments, which were previously scattered in different parts of the town, practically effects the centralisation of the offices of the administration of local government in Acton.

The New Buildings are the outcome of the serious steps taken some years ago, in January 1903, to provide the requisite accommodation. The first three years of that period were spent in arranging for and devising a very complete and elaborate scheme comprising a Town Hall, in addition to the necessary Council Chamber, Public Offices, etc., but as this scheme proved abortive, in April 1906 the Council decided to proceed with the erection of Municipal Buildings at a cost not exceeding £35,000 and the plans for the original scheme were modified accordingly. However, before this modified scheme had reached maturity, it was abandoned upon



the advent of the Council elected in March 1907. The new Council commenced *de novo*, inviting Architects of at least seven years' standing to send in plans for the proposed buildings which were not to cost more than £18,000 and offering premiums of 100, 50, and 25 guineas for the first, second and third selected designs respectively. Forty sets of competitive plans were received and these were adjudicated upon by Mr. Norman Shaw as Assessor. His award was accepted by the Council and the premiums awarded accordingly.

The second premiated design was adopted and Messrs. Raffles and Gridley became the appointed Architects for the erection of the buildings. After the quantities had been taken out by Messrs. Matthews and Coleman, of 11 Old Queen Street, Westminster, S.W. thirty-eight tenders were received for the erection, and the Council accepted the lowest—that of Mr. F. G. Minter, of High Street, Putney, S.W., at the sum of £15,608. Mr. W. Tunstall Clarke became Clerk of Works, and in due course the Foundation Stone was laid, on the 3rd of April 1909, by Mr. Councillor E. Monson, J.P., who was then the Chairman of the Council.

The completed Buildings have frontages on Winchester Street and Salisbury Street, with the principal entrance in the former. The fronts are designed in a free Renaissance style faced with Portland stone and red bricks.

The entrance hall and principal staircase occupy a space of 34 feet by 16 feet, corridors opening left and right out of this hall and subsidiary corridors leading to the North and South blocks. On the Ground Floor are the Accountant's Department which comprises eight rooms, including a Rates Office; the Education Department having four rooms, and the Public Health Department eight rooms.

There are also on this floor five rooms belonging to the Surveyor's Department and communicating with the rest of this department on the first floor by a separate staircase.

On the First Floor are five rooms comprising the Clerks' Department, and seven rooms devoted to the Surveyor's Department, which includes a large drawing office. Facing the principal staircase is a Public Waiting Room, and to the left, through swing doors in an oak screen, are the Council Chamber, 60 feet by 42 feet and 25 feet high, a large Committee Room and the Councillors' Retiring Room.

The Council Chamber has an ornamental fibrous plaster ceiling, cove, and cornice supported by parian pilasters and columns. The ornamental ceilings were executed by Mr. Gilbert Searle of Camberwell. There is a panelled Austrian oak dado round the Council Chamber, and the floor is of oak laid in narrow widths. The furniture in this room was designed by the Architects, and executed by Mr. J. P. White of Bedford. On the Second Floor, four rooms were provided for the Electrical Engineer's Department; there are also a Staff Club Room, and a suite of five rooms and offices for the Caretaker.

The heating is by open fires chiefly, but a supplementary heating system of atmospheric steam has been installed by Messrs. Moorwood Sons and Co. Ltd., of Gray's Inn Road, W.C. The dado of the Entrance Hall and principal staircase is of Roman Marble by Messrs. Whitehead and Sons, and the Terrazzo floors, mosaic steps, and landings by Messrs. Diespeker, of Holborn Viaduct. All the floors are of steel and concrete construction, those in the offices being finished with pitch pine boarding in narrow widths; and all partitions other than brick walls—are in Mack's Patent Pumice Slabs. There are four commodious Strong Rooms provided, fitted with tubular iron shelving. All the departments are self-contained and the buildings planned so that the Council Chamber and Committee Room occupies the quietest part of the site. Local firms, Mr. T. H. Edgar, Messrs. T. J. Edwards and Co., and Messrs. Perring and Co., carried out the furnishing of the offices.

The Council limited the expenditure on the buildings, exclusive of the boundary railing and piers, to £18,000, but this sum was not reached—the accepted tender, inclusive of boundary railing, etc., having been £15,608. Certain extras afterwards sanctioned by the Council increased this amount however to £17,193.

The opening ceremony, which took place on the 10th of March, 1910, was performed by Mr. Herbert Nield, J.P., M.P., the Member for the Division, the Chairman of the Council Mr. Councillor W. Eydmann, Jr., J.P., presiding,



The New Council Chamber, Acton.

supported by the Mayor of Hammersmith and the Chairman of the Chiswick Urban District Council.

Seven years before the erection of the Municipal Buildings just described, on the 28th of February 1903—under the Chairmanship of the Council of Mr. T. H. Morris, J.P., another pressing need of Acton had been supplied. This was the provision of the fine Swimming and Public Baths which are situated directly opposite the old Priory in Salisbury Street. For many years the neighbourhood was without anything of the kind—the nearest baths being those

at Ealing. The provision of this town necessity was taken up with great zeal by the Chairman of the Council and his co-members, and ably supported by Mr. D. J. Ebbetts, the late Engineer and Surveyor to the Council, from whose drawings and specifications and under whose superintendence, the whole of the work was carried out. These Baths are amongst the finest erected near London, containing two large swimming Baths, one 105 feet by 30 feet with all modern fittings, while the other and smaller bath used in the cold weather is 75 feet by 30 feet. The buildings are faced with red brick with blue plinths and stone dressings. The walls and floors of the ponds are lined with glazed bricks and the floors of the corridors and the bath-rooms laid with mosaic pavement. The installation of lavatory baths was at that time the first of the kind in London. Visits were made by a committee to baths of this description at Cardiff and Cheltenham, which, with some modifications by the Council's Surveyor, were adopted. It is held that these lavatory or "Lassar" baths, as they are called,



Acton Public Swimming Baths.

have many sanitary advantages, are more efficient, expeditious, and less costly in water supply than the old fashioned slipper baths. The bather can stand upon a floor grating in the warmed bathroom and turn on fine sprays of warm water and after securing a thorough and pleasant bath, can finish with a warm, cool or cold spray according to desire. The contract for the building work was let to Messrs. Galbraith Bros., of Camberwell Green at the sum of £12,467, while the engineering work was carried out by Messrs. W. Boaz and Sons of West India Dock Road, the contract for which was £3398 10s.

The Swimming baths are provided with all modern equipment, convenient dressing boxes, spring boards, water chutes, etc., while the buildings contain a boiler house, laundry, and superintendent's house. The larger bath is arranged with removable floor and during the winter season is largely in use as an assembly or concert hall.



Although from a directly financial point of view the income from the baths has been probably less than anticipated and the cost of installment, interest and maintenance heavy, their use has already proved how necessary they were for such a large and populous district as Acton.

Another public building recently provided is the new Fire Station situated on the High Street, about midway between the St. Mary's Church and the old District Council Offices. It has formed very convenient and suitable headquarters for the efficient Acton Fire Brigade, whose services, although fortunately not very frequently required, have been most timely in quickly dealing with any outbreaks of fire which have occurred. They have however, perhaps more frequently been called out for adjoining districts. The building was designed by Mr. D. J. Ebbets, the late Engineer and Surveyor to the Council, and is well



Photo

Large Swimming Bath arranged for a Meeting.

Upjohn.

equipped with all the necessary appliances for prompt and effective work.

In reference to the early days of the Fire Brigade in Acton, Captain C. T. Poore writes :—

“The first proposal of Acton having a Fire Engine was after the fire which occurred at the Steyne Mills about 1866, now occupied by Messrs. Baldwin and Co. It was attended by a small Manual engine sent from Chiswick, which was drawn by men and boys, and an engine was also sent from Hammersmith. After this fire a meeting of the inhabitants was called to consider the advisability of providing proper fire appliances. The result was that Messrs. Fox and Over, who were members of the Local Board, were requested to look into the details of the matter. Finally it was decided to establish a Fire Brigade and to provide proper appliances.



Acton Fire Station, High Street.

The Brigade was formed in the year 1868, a manual engine and other fire appliances were purchased by the Acton Local Board, and these were housed in a shed adjoining the 'William IV.' Public House situated at the corner of Market Place and King Street. This particular Fire Engine was exhibited at the Exhibition of 1862. The first Captain of the Brigade was Mr. T. Billington. A few of the founders are still living in the district, and are well known by the old parishioners, amongst them may be mentioned: Mr. T. Poore, Senr., Mr. W. A. Brown, Mr. W. Eydmann, Senr., and Mr. E. Monson, Senr. They were called together by means of a call boy and the horsing of the engine was done by the local job master. About the year 1871 the Local Board Offices were built upon the site of the old Pound which stood at the bottom of Acton Hill, and provision was then made for the fire appliances in the rear of same, and this was continued until the year 1899, when the present fire station was erected by the Acton District Council, who also added to the plant a Steam Fire Engine, Escape, and other appliances. A system of electric call bells was installed and used for the calling of Members of the Brigade together, and also Fire Alarm Posts were fixed in various parts of the Town.





Acton Public Lending and Reference Library.

The most notable fire in the early history of the Brigade was that of Messrs. Sheldrick's Brewery, which was situated on the site of the old Cock Crown Yard and was at the High Street end of Crown Street. Another notable event occurred in the evening of the 25th November, 1871. While a van laden with petroleum was being unloaded at Mr. Hough's oil and colour stores, which was situated on the site of the present public house called the 'Six Bells,' the van boy discovered a leaky cask of oil which became ignited and the whole of the contents of the van were consumed. Shops and houses on both sides of the road were greatly damaged by the heat. At the present time the Brigade consists of about 23 Members and is still practically a voluntary Brigade, with the exception of one man who resides at the Station."

The Chief Officer is Mr. C. T. Poore. Several of the Members who are now in the Brigade have already served upwards of 25 years. At the rear of the fire engine house a Mortuary was also erected from designs by Mr. Ebbetts.



In the year 1898 efforts were made, particularly by Mr. W. Carrington Smith and Mr. E. F. Hunt, to secure for the district a Public Library. J.C. 2

The Public Libraries Act of 1892 was adopted on January 4th, 1898, and a committee afterwards appointed to purchase the site and prepare plans. Their efforts had a successful issue and they were fortunate in receiving a munificent gift from W. Passmore Edwards, Esq., who contributed £4,000 toward the cost of the handsome library building which was erected. It is upon the south side of the High Street, and directly opposite the corner secured for the new Public Offices, and the extensive use of it has amply justified the anticipations of those who have from time to time generously contributed to it. The foundation stone of the building was laid by Lord George Hamilton M.P., in November 1898, and the Library opened by His Excellency the Hon. Joseph H. Choate, the American Ambassador



*Photos*

*[Wakefield, Chiswick and Brentford.*

- (1) Coronation Procession passing Library. (2) Entering the Parish Church.  
 (3) Returning from Church, Councillor Crane late Chairman Acton Council,  
 Mr. T. H. Morris Chairman last Coronation Committee and Mr. W. Hodson,  
 Clerk to the Council, in front.

in January 1900. The public began the use of the Reading and Magazine Rooms on January 5th, of the Reference Library on January 8th, and of the Lending Library in February of that year. The issues of books for the first two months amounted to 19,066 and the approximate daily visitors 1190 on week-days; for the year ending March 1912, the issue of books from the lending library was 134,916, and the reference department 9852. The approximate number of visitors was 2000 daily. Although the lending library and reading rooms have been chiefly used,

attention may especially be called to the fact that in the excellent Reference Library in this building there is a valuable collection of technical books and amongst them a considerable number contributed for its use by the Middlesex County Council. A greater use than at present might be made of these and other valuable books by local students.

The lending library continues to be well patronised. It cannot be denied that the proportion of its circulation which is of works of fiction, is in common with many other districts, too high; but the reading habit once acquired can never be wholly lost, and under wise guidance of the Committee of Selection may be a valuable means of very wide and informing work.

The Public Library has also received some handsome gifts in works of art



The Acton Passmore Edwards Cottage Hospital.

which have been hung upon the walls, amongst other generous donors, Mr. W. Martin has contributed a number.

Besides these a number of pictures and prints are also on loan. Much as these are appreciated, they make more evident the need which exists for some central museum and gallery where the excellent training begun in our schools, could by sight and suggestion, be carried forward, to the great advantage of the district and the furtherance of its corporate influence in all that makes for mental and moral culture.

While the town was making rapid progress in its commercial and industrial life, with the attendant increased demand for prompt treatment of injuries or illness, the provision of a Cottage Hospital was recognised as a necessity. Through the generosity of Lord and Mr. Leopold de Rothschild a suitable site was given for the



purpose and this was followed by the erection of the necessary building, which was the generous gift of Mr. Passmore Edwards after whom it was named. In the year of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, 1897, on June 9th the Foundation Stone was laid by Lady Rothschild; and on the 4th of May 1898 the Acton Cottage Hospital was opened. It is built of red and yellow bricks with red tiles, the design being an adaptation of the Georgian style. The main entrance opens into Gunnersbury Lane and presents a cheerful and homelike appearance. The building consists mainly of a ground floor storey, thus obviating the necessity of taking accident cases upstairs. When first built there were two chief wards, one for men, the other for women, each containing 10 beds, besides two private wards into which patients are received at a minimum payment of £2 2s. a week, an invalid kitchen, dispensary, operating room, etc. During the year 1909, among the alterations and additions that were made, a separate ward for children with 8 cots was added, and better accommodation for a



Tug-of-War, Coronation Sports, Acton, 1911.

*Photo:*

*Wakefield, Chiswick & Brentford.*

very large number of Out-Patients provided. The great amount of suffering which has been relieved, and has been done by the devoted medical staff, the matron and the nurses, is best shown by the large number who have received benefit. In the year 1910, over two hundred and seventy 'In-Patients' were admitted, and nearly seventeen hundred 'Out-Patients' relieved. The cottage hospital is carried on chiefly by voluntary support, and when it is remembered that help is given to all the sick poor in need of it, those who desire to aid a beneficent work may feel confident in helping forward this hospital, and that such contributions are wisely used under the careful administration of an able Committee, to whom, as to the local medical profession and the staff, the thanks and loyal hearty co-operation of the inhabitants of the town are due.

The complementary work in this direction, the provision of an Isolation Hospital, was undertaken later by the District Council. This has been located



on the lands and estate purchased by the Council and known as the "Friars." The Administrative block is an old building adapted to the new requirements. An illustration and some description of this has already been given in the historical section. Provision is made in this building for the Medical Staff and Dispensary, and for the accommodation of the Matron and the Nurses; there is also a commodious Committee room.

All the wards are built with cavity walls lined inside with glazed brick dado, and rendered above in cement. The floors are laid with hard wood blocks and all angles of the woodwork are rounded preventing any gathering of dust.

The Isolation Block contains two wards of two beds and a single bed ward, with Nurses' room, bath-room, and usual offices. The Enteric and Scarlet Fever



Coronation Celebration, Gathering of Children at Chiswick.

*Photo :*

*Wakefield, Chiswick & Brentford.*

blocks each contain a ward of eight beds for males and six for females, with Nurses' room, etc. The Laundry block comprises washing room, drying room, and ironing room all fitted with the latest type of laundry machinery. There is also a disinfecting station with a disinfector; and Mortuary, Ambulance and Van Sheds are provided. The whole of the original new buildings are of stock brickwork with red brick dressings and tiled roofs.

The opening of the Isolation Hospital took place on the 18th of January 1905 and its useful work as well as all other matters relating to the public health of our town have owed much to the capacity and devotion of its Chairman, E. F. Hunt, Esq. The recent growth of the town having rendered the accommodation insufficient, an additional Pavilion has been added.

This construction is of concrete slabs and the floors of special asbestos composition. The additional accommodation this affords is thirty-six beds in two large wards, and two separate wards of one bed each. The Council were fortunate in securing for this Hospital and other public works the excellent site containing some thirteen acres in a commanding position at the north of the town.

Although Acton had long been known as one of the healthiest suburban localities near London, the rapid growth of the town and the establishment of an Isolation Hospital made the exclusive services of a medical officer a necessity. Before the year 1905 the Health Department had been under the care of Dr. Garry Simpson, ably assisted by Mr. M. W. Kinch the Sanitary Inspector. The selection and appointment of Dr. Thomas to devote the whole of his time to this department has made it possible to carry on the general Public Health work in a more thorough and efficient way than was previously practicable; and excellent results have followed the appointment of Mr. Kinch as Inspector of foods and drugs.

One of the public works which has been the subject of much discussion,

and since its installation has led to considerable controversy, is the electricity undertaking of the Council opened in 1905. Before the Council's existence, as long ago as the 11th June, 1891, the provisional order was granted to the Acton Local Board. None of the schemes suggested were adopted, and it was not until 27th July 1903, the Board of Trade wrote to the Council stating that unless some actual steps were taken before the end of a year from the date of their letter they would consider the advisability of revoking the order. Two Electric Companies were at this time seeking powers to supply current in



Electricity Works, Wales Farm Road, Acton, W.

Acton. On the 10th of November, 1903, Mr. W. H. Trentham was appointed consulting electrical engineer, and subsequently an agreement was entered into between the District Council and the Metropolitan Electric Supply Company under which the latter from their works at Willesden supplied current in bulk to the Council. Plans and specifications were prepared by the consulting engineer and application was made to the Local Government Board for permission to borrow £54,091. Tenders were obtained and on the 26th April 1904, accepted for the Council's electrical plant; The Lancashire Dynamo and Motor Co., Ltd., Messrs. Cowan and Co., the Electrical Power Storage Co., Mr. J. Hitchin and the St. Helen's Cable Company, Ltd., being the contractors.

On the 12th July, 1904, the tender of Messrs. Galbraith Bros. was accepted for the erection of the Station and the house for the Resident Engineer, from plans prepared by Mr. Ebbetts, then the Council's Surveyor.

The Foundation Stone was laid on August 3rd, by the late Mr. Councillor J. W. Jarratt, J.P. then Chairman of the Council, and the first length of cable was laid by Mr. Councillor T. H. Morris, Chairman of the Electricity Committee.

On the 29th September, 1904, the Council appointed Mr. J. Martin Blair as Resident Electrical Engineer. By the end of the year most of the work was nearing completion. The first actual light supplied was to the newly erected Central Schools, and to the Isolation Hospital which was opened on January 18th, 1905. On Friday March 17th the supply was put on to the town, and before the close of the first financial year about thirty-six streets and roads had had cables laid in them. To lay in the cables for supply to the various consumers in these thoroughfares necessitated laying seven and a half miles of "feeders" and twenty-three miles of "distributor." These cables were laid in



Mr. Councillor Crane at the Camp of the Acton Young Men's Own, Burnham Beeches.

trenching filled in with bitumen and covered with asphalte. In addition to the cables for supplying current there were seven and a half miles of telephone cable and five miles of pilot cable. The last-named enables the Engineer-in-charge at the works to see the exact pressure of the current at any of the feeding points, and by this means, consumers get the full pressure to which they are entitled.

The Council's Electricity Works were connected with the Metropolitan Electric Supply Company with two pairs of extra high pressure concentric cables; and adjoining the machine room where the transformers were placed, there was a battery house and a large storage battery, made by the Electrical Power Storage Company, able to maintain the supply of electricity to the town after midnight, and during a greater part of the day.

Concerning the transfer of the electricity undertaking from the Council to a Company, the late Chairman of the Council, Mr. Councillor Crane, writes:—

"In the autumn of 1910, all other matters municipal were almost forgotten in the fierce strife which raged around the question whether the electricity undertaking should be transferred to the Metropolitan Electric Supply Co., Ltd.

The Council was equally divided on the main principle, and almost so upon leading details, and on various divisions which took place, the party in favour of the transfer carried their views, sometimes by a majority of one, and at other times by the casting vote of the Chairman. A deputation appointed to negotiate with the Supply Co. ultimately reported in favour of a transfer on the terms of the Company taking over the Town Loan Liability, and contributing £5000 to rates and giving certain undertakings as to treatment of consumers, etc.

A public outcry against this handing over a public service to private enterprise was made in local meetings and press articles, great private pressure being brought to bear on Councillors who were in favour of the transfer, until some of them declared to their leader—the Chairman of the Council—that they would not support the matter further without the warrant either of an election or a poll of the town. The latter was decided upon, and on the 16th November, 1910, every ratepayer received a reply post-card asking for his yea or nay, accompanied by a statement of the financial position and terms proposed, drawn up by the Clerk and Accountant to the Council.



Out of the 12,312 Voting Cards sent out, 4,684 were returned, the result being a majority for the transfer of 256. Many however were not satisfied and on a Bill being presented to Parliament to enable the Council to make the transfer (which could not be done without statutory aid) it was further contested before a Committee of the House, witnesses endeavouring to persuade the committee that the concern, though hitherto a loss, could, in the future, be made to pay, and that it would be in the interests of Acton to retain the undertaking than to sell it. The opposition was, however, unsuccessful, and the Bill passed both Houses, received Royal Assent, and the Supply Company entered into possession as from the 31st March, 1911, under the rights thus granted to them, which extend for 42 years, at the expiration of which time the Municipality has the right to repurchase on terms.

It was a happy circumstance that the strife incident to the electricity question was immediately followed by the need to prepare for the local celebrations in connection with the Coronation of King George V. in June, 1911. The Councils of Middlesex generally were arranging for local celebrations on the day of coronation, consisting of the entertainment of the School children of the district, and in some cases of the aged poor, but the Council of Acton decided to invite the leading townsmen to unite in organising an altogether larger scheme of town rejoicing, and an influential committee was quickly formed, and the celebrations, which lasted three days, (June 22-23-24) were declared on all hands to be amongst the most successful in Middlesex. It was estimated that on Coronation Day, Acton Park contained over 40,000 persons.

In connection with the festivities, a new Bandstand was erected and opened, and a piece of vacant land, originally intended for a Town Hall, in the High Street was converted into an ornamental garden, and called The King George V. Garden—to the naming of which His Majesty was pleased to give personal assent."

A few further coronation incidents may be noted : There were no less than three hundred and seventy-one aged poor at the supper in the Central Hall, which was followed by an entertainment arranged by Miss Councillor Smee, and which, says the 'Express' from which particulars are taken, "was vastly enjoyed."

A commemoration tree was planted in Acton Park on the site of the old windmill already referred to in

the historical section. Councillor Gee observed that he remembered it stood there something like fifty-six years ago and that he had worked in that mill. A fifty year old flag was floating in the breeze outside Messrs. Snell's Establishment on Acton Hill. It had already been flown on the occasion of the late King's wedding in 1863; his Thanksgiving Celebration in 1871; the two Jubilees of 1887 and 1897; Queen Victoria's death in 1901; King Edward's Coronation, 1902; and as a



Mr. Councillor Crane late Chairman Acton District Council and Councillor Pratt, Coronation Day.



The late  
Mr. Councillor J. W. Jarratt, J.P.

mournful signal at the time of his death. Upwards of eight thousand children gathered in Acton Park, and as a natural consequence of the great crowds the timely care of the excellent ambulance corps was in requisition.

One of the most striking features of Acton's Coronation Celebration was the huge bonfire lit at North Acton on Coronation Night. Its glare illuminated the sky for miles, and it was one of the chain of the old time beacon fires revived at this festive period. Throughout the country some two thousand five hundred of these coronation bonfires were lit on Thursday night, and the highest point in each topographical district was invariably chosen for the burning pile. North Acton stands very high, and the site chosen for the pile was the mound at the rear of the Council Cemetery. Here under the direction of Mr. C. Yorath, Assistant Surveyor

to the Council, a huge construction of combustible material had been completed twenty-five feet square and rising thirty feet high.

About five minutes to ten a brilliant star was apparent in the sky looking south-east; this was the commencing signal fired by Royalty at the Festival of Empire at the Crystal Palace, and five minutes later a heavy detonating rocket was the signal for all bonfires to be fired. A stiff breeze was blowing from the south-west, and the torch was applied to the summit—previously saturated with petrol—and it quickly blazed down the north side spreading rapidly until all was aflame and the mass one roaring furnace, the crackle of which was clearly heard by all on the roadside nearly a quarter of a mile distant. It was a magnificent spectacle—a fitting finish to the great day's rejoicings.

On coming to the throne the King had before him no ordinary experience in having to succeed one who had enthroned himself in the affections of his people as the world-lamented King Edward VII. had done. But in addition there was also the legacy to which the King so unexpectedly succeeded, of a constitutional ques-

tion, unprecedented in magnitude in any recent reign. He has loyally kept his resolution, made in the grief-stricken time of the nation's unlooked for bereavement, to follow that father, into whose brief reign had been wrought so large an influence making for the world's peace. It is perhaps most apparent in the nation's ever deepening recognition that both by his devotion to the greatest of English institutions—a pure simple home life—and by his dedication to all the heavy demands made upon a constitutional monarch, he has more permanently than ever come to reign in the heart of the Empire, "broad based upon the people's will."

Quite recently Acton was honoured by a visit from the King and Queen to Mr. and Mrs. Leopold de Rothschild at Gunnersbury Park. Later still the



Leopold de Rothschild, Esq.  
President of the Acton Coronation Committee.



*Photo]*

His Majesty King George V.

*[W. & D. Downey.*

(Copyright).





*Photo*

Her Majesty Queen Mary.

*[W. & D. Downey.]*

(Copyright).

practical sympathy shown by their Majesties, with suffering caused by the industrial unrest, adds one more to the ever recurring evidences of their interest in their people and their gracious readiness to minister to those in distress. These are the traditions, which, as often as they are revived, breathe their own peculiar benison of blessing.

Mr. Councillor Crane further kindly contributes a short appreciation of our late townsman, Mr. Councillor J. W. Jarratt, J.P.:—"Few men have made a greater mark on the municipal history of Acton than Mr. John William Jarratt, J.P., who was Chairman of the District Council during the eventful years 1904-5 and 6—the years which saw the Acton Sewage Act, the Acton Provisional Order (Street Widening) and the Acton Improvement Act start and come to fruition, and the famous £100,000 Town Hall scheme come to nought. Settling in Acton in the nineties, Mr. Jarratt came from the progressive city of Bradford, where for years he had been a Town Councillor and a J.P. of the borough, and but a year or two after arriving in Acton he was elected on our governing municipal body, where his strong individuality soon made itself felt. Mr. Jarratt was a man whose influence counted, and the far-reaching schemes we have mentioned



*Photo]*

*[Wakefield, Chiswick & Brentford.*

*A corner of Acton Park on Coronation Day.*

were due in large measure to his initiative and in their accomplishment to his tact, ability and perseverance.

One of the earliest acts of the Council under the guidance of Mr. Jarratt was to make a thorough overhauling of the municipal staff and departments. The clerk, Mr. Alexander Hemsley (since deceased) was an honoured old servant, but what is known as a "part-time" official, and it was decided to pension him as consulting solicitor, and issue advertisements for a gentleman who should devote his whole time to the office. This resulted in securing Mr. William Hodson, who still remains Clerk to the Council, and is acknowledged to be one of the best authorities on local government, law and practice to be found in municipal circles. Next, the accounts and financial department was separated (having previously been an annexe of the clerk's department) and a new chief official appointed as Accountant to the Council, and under the powers of the new Act all the rate collections, both "District" and "Poor" were put under him, together with the new Electricity undertaking's finances and collection. Mr. Samuel Lord, the gentleman selected from a large number of applicants from all parts of the country, has proved a great success as an efficient organiser.

Following the Royal assent to the Provisional Order Act, the notices to treat were served and the working initiated which eventually resulted in the clearance of that slum-spot of Central Acton known as Cock and Crown Yard, the abolition of the Church Road forecourts and the cutting of the new street now known as "Crown Street."

Mr. Jarratt was a Nonconformist and a man of exemplary private life, and his death in 1911 was mourned by a large circle. He had, however, quitted public life several years before his death. This was on the Town Hall scheme being brought to nought by the intervention of the Local Government Board, who declared that a scheme of £100,000 was too extravagant for the town. Whether Mr. Jarratt's resignation was due to this circumstance, or to ill health or the tiring that comes from many years of strenuous unthanked work, nobody will know, for his resignation was characteristic in its terms: 'I hereby resign from the Urban District Council of Acton.' No reasons, no palaver, no previous



*Photo]*

*[Coronation Bonfire, Acton, 1911. (Wakefield, Chiswick & Brentford.*

notice. It came as a bombshell. In vain did deputations wait upon him, and private friends attempt to wheedle his secret from him. The strong good man who resolved in his public declaration to give no reason was not likely to do so to semi-official deputations. His final public municipal act was like all the acts of his splendid record on the Council; it was backed by conscientious conviction of right, and he neither courted approval nor cared for disapproval.

This same strong individuality backed by conscience made for him more than one enemy among those who mistook his strength of will and purpose for masterful bluster, and conscientious clinging to the right for obstinacy; probably however, his enemies were far fewer than were imagined, for at his death some of those most in opposition on the Town Hall Scheme were apparently most sincere in their tributes to his memory. Truly, John W. Jarratt was a man the like of whom has not often appeared among the leaders of Acton. It is doubtful whether his services and real influence in the neighbourhood have been sufficiently



recognised, and still more doubtful whether the town derived half the good it might have from his fine experience and powers of judgment and foresight, if he could have been prevailed upon to continue one of the town's leaders. Mr. Jarratt left a widow and son (Mr. J. W. Jarratt, B.A.) and daughter (Mrs. Birkenshaw)."

Another public requirement about the location and erection of which there was a great diversity of opinion, and which was delayed for some years, was the Dust and Refuse Destructor. It was finally decided to build this on land to the south-east of the electricity works. This was settled none too soon, as dust amounting to over 14,000 tons per annum was in the interval placed on vacant land near the cemetery until the heap became of great size. The Destructor was finally obtained from Messrs. Hughes and Sterling, Engineers, and the buildings and chimney erected by Messrs. Galbraith Bros. and Messrs. Custodis. The work was completed by the engineers in March, 1909.

In connection with the town's sewage, a large work was undertaken and completed under the direction of the late Surveyor, which resulted in the saving of a considerable



Acton Park—Horticultural Society Prize Giving.

outlay, by changing the treatment of the sewage of the district from the costly precipitation method and avoiding an expensive outlay for chemicals and the large accumulation of sludge.

In the summer of 1911 some heavy rains proved the inadequacy of the storm-water drainage facilities of the District having regard to the alterations due to its rapid growth; and a committee was appointed to consider the matter. The scheme recommended by Sir Alexander Binnie in 1907, known as the "Northern Relief Sewer," although not yet undertaken may be regarded as an early possibility.

During the past few years the number of inhabited houses in Acton has increased with amazing speed, in addition to which a considerable number of extensive factories have been built, a great many miles of new roads and streets have been completed, involving a very large increase in the work of the various departments under the direction of the Council.

If some of the thoroughfares are not all that might be desired, it must be borne in mind that the Council had to overtake many arrears in public works, and in recent years to make up for the long period in which Acton had been without any extensive public undertakings. Although so much new work has been taken in hand, new property acquired, and buildings erected for public use and benefit, it has been accomplished without any exorbitant or seriously heavy increase in the rates. The policy of the District Council has been from the first one of steady progress, and although in its composition and membership there have been many changes and wide differences, and not a little divergence of opinion, on the whole there has been constant advance, generally a continuity of purpose, and a keen watchfulness for improvements or schemes calculated to promote the health and enjoyment of the whole community.

In addition to the exacting routine work of a considerable Sanitary authority,



*Photo :*

Acton Fire Brigade in the Park.

*Upjohn.*

Lighting, Drainage, Sewage disposal, Dust collection, Building inspection, Road repairs and watering, and various duties under the Medical Officer of Health and the Sanitary Inspectors, the District Council has given much time and thought to other affairs of importance, looking forward to the needs of the future with a general readiness to seize opportunities as they arise for the best development of the district. The Parks and open spaces in different parts of the town are evidences of this care and forethought. The first important open space acquired in the town was the Acton Park near the centre of the district, containing about twenty-five acres, rising with pleasant slopes and undulations from Uxbridge Road to Churchfield Road East. Here are Tennis Courts and a Bowling Green, Cricket pitches and other outdoor games, apparatus, swings, etc., with band stands, seats, and many pleasant walks.



The acquisition, a few years ago, of a new Fire Engine and equipment for the Fire Brigade of the town aroused interest by the novelty of their practice in the parks, and occasionally gathered a crowd of town-folk to witness the display.

Many picturesque bits are to be seen in this chief park of Acton—commonly called the Recreation Grounds, or briefly the “Rec.” It has a pleasant and commanding position and a wide sweep of open space at a considerably higher level on the northern side, and it is left sufficiently open for the public to wander free over most of its area. It also affords an excellent ground for the enjoyment of children and young people, either at sport, rest or play. The Band Stand occupies a central position and two bands play in the park during the summer. These are the Acton Town Band and the Acton Temperance Band. Chairs have been provided by the Council for use during the Band performances, which have been much appreciated



A Rustic Bridge, formerly in Acton Park.

and fairly well patronised. The annual shows of the Acton Horticultural Society have been generally held in these grounds.

Large numbers from the town and district turn out for a day's enjoyment, and besides the Exhibition of vegetables, flowers, etc., an interesting programme of sports and amusements has frequently been provided, sometimes varied with instructive life-saving displays and athletic contests. The last exhibition was held in the Central Hall during the present season. This useful Society has done good work from which excellent results have followed, and it is worthy hearty support and encouragement.

On the extreme northern side of the park now stands the square and unlettered obelisk already illustrated which formerly stood in a secluded dell at the rear of Derwentwater House. When the estate was sold the obelisk was presented to the town by the purchaser Mr. Kerven, and the District Council had it removed and





The Park—Looking Southward.

placed in its present position. It still awaits legend or device, or someone to disclose the mystery surrounding it, or to reveal the history of its first erection.

Another peep on the western side of the park, nearer the Uxbridge Road, shows a corner devoted to outdoor gymnasia and children's amusements and sports, thoughtfully provided by the District Council. Other open spaces already secured include the new Southfield Road Park, purchased with the help of the County Council in 1908, and containing twelve-and-a-half acres. Although not settled or entirely ready for permanent laying-out, it affords a valuable lung in this rapidly developing neighbourhood.



A Rest—Acton Park.

Farther down near the boundary of the District are the triangular open spaces of Acton Green where a drinking fountain and other improvements have been carried out.

Nearer to the thickly populated portion of South Acton and opposite the All Saints' Church the South Acton Recreation Grounds are available; there is however an absence here of any considerable amount of shade, and the suggestion of restfulness might be more freely carried out than it is at present.

One of the recent additions to the pleasure grounds of Acton is the bit of timbered hillside called the "Woodlands" in the centre of the town adjoining the grounds of the County School already described. Here are some fine old elms, pines, cedar and other trees, and though the space is only a couple of acres it is a very pleasant retreat.

Another small open space at the steyne has been enclosed and planted with shrubs and to the north of the town an extensive space of twenty-two-and-a-half



Children's Corner—Acton Park.

acres has been secured for playing-fields and park, to be known as the Acton Playing Fields.

The latest open space laid out during last year (1911) was the vacant land in front of the new Town Hall and Public Baths. All of these pleasure and recreation grounds are under the control of the District Council, while there still remain in private possession some of the pleasant portions of Springfield Park and North Acton.

In addition to the open spaces provided for the general use of the inhabitants, the Council owns a piece of land in the south-eastern portion of the District, comprising over five-and-a-half acres, mainly used for sewage filtration and as a general dépôt. There is also stabling for horses and a steam disinfector on the same site; and a dépôt, mostly used for carts, near the Priory Schools.



At a Cricket Match, North Acton.

Many of the rustic bits about Acton have already disappeared with the advance of new streets and modern dwellings. One peep from the midst of woodland was from the eastern side of the County School. Looking townward the landscape was extremely picturesque—the old Church tower standing up in the distance, with the gables of the buildings along the High Street, the valley running between, the tall elms and other trees, and the whole viewed from a surrounding tangle of undergrowth, made it difficult to realise that this was in the heart of a town of over fifty thousand people.



A View in "Woodlands," Acton.



The Cemetery, and land for its enlargement already secured, includes over six-and-a-half acres. The first interment took place here on March 16th, 1895, and now about five hundred take place each year. Water mains are laid on to facilitate watering the shrubs, etc., and already the grounds are less bare than many places of burial.

For those unfamiliar with the neighbourhood, a few particulars and statistics may be of interest. The district of Acton is on the main road from London to Uxbridge, and is some three miles from north to south and about one and one-third miles from east to west. Through roads connect it with the important districts of Hammersmith, Ealing, Willesden and Chiswick. Its area in statute acres is 2305; it has nearly ten thousand inhabited houses, and the district is rapidly increasing both in population and rateable value. In the year 1866 the population was under five thousand, and is now nearly sixty thousand; the number of assessments forty years ago was less than fourteen hundred, and is now considerably over twelve thousand; while the rateable value, which in 1866 was a little over £43,000, has now risen to nearly £400,000. In the large and commodious Council Schools



The Cemetery and Chapel—North Acton.

there is accommodation for upwards of ten thousand scholars. There are over forty miles of roads in the districts; tramways through the centre of the town run direct to Hammersmith, Shepherd's Bush and Uxbridge, and from the Market Place to Willesden, Hendon, and Cricklewood; there are railway stations on the Great Western Railway main line, on the North London Railway, and on the Metropolitan District Railway; there is also a halt on the Greenford branch of the Great Western railway at North Acton, and shortly a station of the extended Central London tube railway will also communicate with North Acton.

Water is supplied to the town by the Metropolitan Water Board, Grand Junction District, and the West Middlesex District. Gas is supplied by the Brentford Gas Company and the Gas Light and Coke Company. Notwithstanding the great development that has already taken place, other estates within the district are about to be laid out for the erection of houses, and an important Town Planning Scheme, which has been proposed by the District Council, indicates the scope of further possible extensive growth along approved modern lines with regard to the most attractive utilisation of the various areas.

An incident of the year 1911 relative to Acton and the nearness to a more primitive state in our neighbourhood is thus referred to in a publication of the underground railway from the city which passes into the open through Turnham Green, Chiswick and Acton:— "Sometime in April an otter was caught near Acton Town Station. It had strayed up the Bollo Brook. It did not survive contact with the electric cables and now, stuffed, has been placed on the westbound platform at Mansion House to remind travellers in the city that the same railway that serves them inside London runs out into a country of running streams and deep grass." The allusion to Bollo Brook may remind old residents of the plentiful watercress beds which bordered the watercourse along the south-western boundary of Acton, and of the old Bollo Bridge which was quite near to the old Mill Hill Park now called Acton Town Station, although the present Bollo



The Park adjoining Acton County School.

Bridge Road begins some distance further down on this old open stream.

In connection with the local rates, it may be noted that the district rate which was four shillings and eightpence in the pound in 1895 was reduced to four and twopence in 1900, at which it stands at the present time. The rate for relief of the poor, county contributions, Metropolitan police, and education, which in 1901 was three and eightpence, has increased to four and eightpence for 1912. But for this it is now possible to point to most efficient schools and general town educational facilities which must be productive of great benefits, and, with recent remedial legislation, eventually alter the old and often deplorable conditions of the unfortunate and the very poor.





Silver Snuff Box Presented to Mr. John Williamson,  
1st Jan., 1844, by the Acton United Friendly  
Society.

Further, it is of interest to note how recent is the date since which the rates have been made by a popularly elected body. Even when Acton was constituted an Urban District in 1866, the Local Board did not make the rate. It was formerly made by the Town Vestry Clerk. The late Mr. John Williamson, the father-in-law of our townsman Edward Monson Esq., J.P., acted in this capacity for a great many years. He was also prominent in many other ways in the town, acting also as Secretary of the Acton United Friendly Society, by which body he was presented with a silver snuff box in 1844. This is now in the possession of his grandson, R. W. Harper, Esq., of King's Bench Walk, Temple. The Aldridges of Old Acton were for a long period successively Vestry Clerks of the Parish "until it came," says Mr. Harper, "to their nephew, a Mr.

Norbury, a solicitor who was assisted by and then succeeded by my grandfather," John Williamson who was both Parish and Vestry Clerk. He was followed by a Mr. Harrup who was the predecessor of Mr. Walter A. Brown the present Vestry Clerk. Mr. Harper gives some reminiscences of Hicks Hall the old Clerkenwell Sessions House where the Middlesex Quarter Sessions were held prior to their transference to Westminster, and states that the famous Jack Shepherd was taken near to Acton. In a letter from Mr. Samuel Lord, the Chief Accountant of the District Council, a few months ago, he wrote:—"As shewing the present popularity and prosperity of the District, mention might be made of a recent report to the Council that for the half-year ended on the 30th September last the percentage of irrecoverable rates due to empty properties was the lowest for ten years."

In this brief outline of the municipal work of the district it only remains to touch upon a few semi-public institutions and associations which exist in our town. Amongst these are the Almshouses for ten men and ten women provided from the Perryn Trust and carried on by the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths.

They are well kept and present a pleasant, inviting appearance. Two splendid specimens of cedars of Lebanon give ample shade as well as beauty to this beneficent institution.

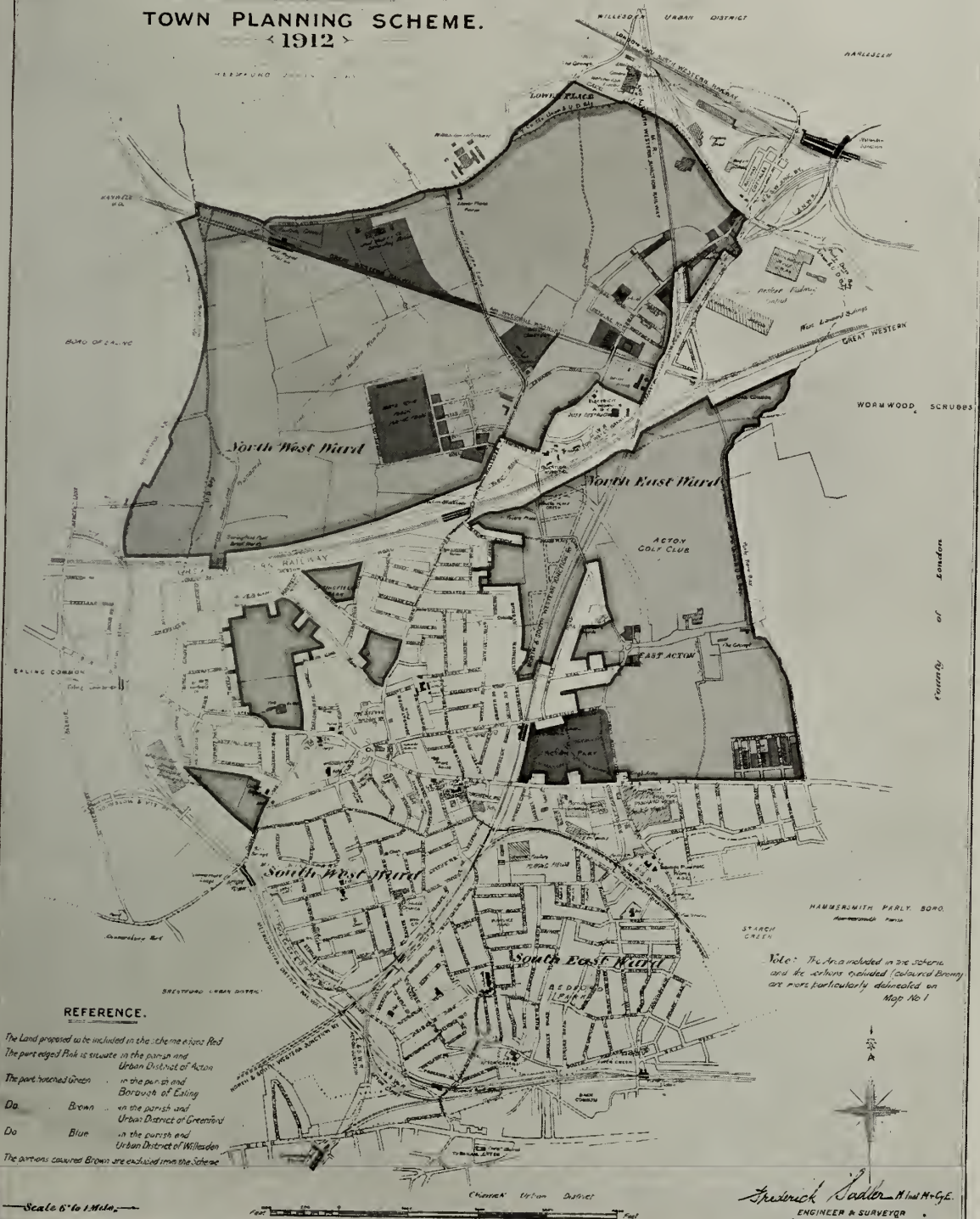
Another semi-public building of the town that has been much used for temperance work and social reform, and was the first public hall, is known as the "Acton Hall," in Church Road. When this was built in the year 1866, Acton was still little more than a village. In the centre of the town the church of St. Mary had stood for some centuries, but neither the Congregational Church, nor the Churchfield Hall had been erected, and there existed no public hall. It was originally intended for letting, and at first was considerably used for Temperance Work, Concerts, Penny Readings, Building Societies and other meetings, and was subsequently the home for longer or shorter periods of several religious bodies, Congregationalists, Baptists, Brethren, Salvation Army, and others. Of this building the "Acton Gazette" of February 3rd, 1905, gives the following account:—"Mr. Blick, the elder, predecessor of the late Mr. Blick, and Mr. Filmer had the hall



# ACTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

HOUSING. TOWN PLANNING ETC. ACT 1909.

## TOWN PLANNING SCHEME. 1912





In front of the Goldsmith Alms Houses.

erected. Mr. Filmer was a greengrocer in the High Street, and a Primitive Methodist of the Park-road Chapel, while Mr. Blick belonged to the Baptists in Church Road. First of the denominations which afterwards used it were the Baptists, who held their Sunday Schools in it. After the dissolving of the partnership of Mr. Filmer and Mr. Blick the elder, it came into the hands of Mr. Blick, and was subsequently sold to Mr. Ashton of Bushey, who purchased it for the purposes of starting a mission. This was placed under the care of an earnest evangelist, Mr. Hopkinson, and became an active centre of work amongst the open Brethren. For some time a good work was carried on, and the mission flourished, this being but one of several halls belonging to Mr. Ashton, who, as one of the Brethren, quite occasionally preached.

After having owned it about five years he sold it to Mr. Flowerdew who let it to the Salvation Army, and other religious bodies, the Newton-avenue Church



The Goldsmith Alms Houses, Acton



occupying it for a short time. It twice changed hands, and galleries were put in the upper portion, much improving its acoustic properties and making it an attractive hall, with seating for over 300. The lower hall has been converted into a refreshment room. It is open for early breakfast for workmen, and its tariff is arranged to meet the necessities of all who require a place of refreshment, entirely free from the use and sale of intoxicants.

The Acton Young Men's Own meets in the lower hall, taking form along the lines of the Adult School and P.S.A., but for young men only. It was in this hall that the first cinematograph was regularly opened in Acton. It continued for about three years. Now the Hall is again occupied by the Salvation Army, which is increasingly active in its work both amongst adults and children. They first held meetings on an open space at the corner of Palmerston Road and Bollobridge Road, and afterwards in a tent on the old Priory Ground, where, owing to the opposition to the work at that time, they had rather stormy meetings. During the present year they have returned from Grove Place to this Hall.

The Acton Philanthropic Society founded in 1867 to help such cases of affliction or distress from illness or other causes in the Parish of Acton, as the Society shall be satisfied, on investigation, are deserving of assistance, has had about 200 cases before it annually. The principle has been to extend help in times of temporary misfortune. No enquiry is made as to politics or religion. The average yearly expenditure is about £120, beside coke and coal



Acton Hall, Church Road.

distributions. At Christmas about 500 gifts have been made. It also has a Pension Fund to assist deserving old people over sixty, until eligible for a State Pension. Dr. H. J. Thornton, L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S., is President, and the Secretary is Mr. Fredk. D. Rice.

A similar work has, since 1908, been undertaken by Mr. Councillor J. F. Shillaker and other willing helpers. Their objective has been: "No hungry child in Acton" at Christmas. The fund, which was about £30 in 1908 and £40 in 1909, leaped to nearly £170 in 1910, and reached £178 in 1911. It has since it was started provided Christmas Cheer to some 8000 men, women and children.

For many years interesting series of town lectures were held under an organisation called the "Acton Lecture Association." The initiative was chiefly taken by Mr. T. H. Morris, ex-chairman of the District Council, who became the first president, and was succeeded in the presidency by the Rector, the Rev. G. S. De Sausmarez, M.A. The lectures began during the session 1901-02 and gave many very pleasant and informing evenings for several years. Well known and capable lecturers were engaged. While the original plan was followed they proved very successful, but not long after the character of the evenings was altered they were less patronized and eventually discontinued.



The Central Aid Society, organised to prevent overlapping in the administration of temporary help in deserving cases, has done a useful work making careful investigation into each individual application. It is established in the Avenue Road, and has been able to afford timely assistance in a large number of instances. Another Society which has since the year 1884 had a beneficent influence by way of mutual help, is the Acton Working Men's Sick Benefit Society. A like very vigorous society, and the first in Acton to become an "approved society" under the Insurance Act, is the Acton Adult School Sick Benefit Society for men, women, and juniors. It is also a dividing society, and has had the able secretaryship of Mr. Councillor F. W. Carter, so well known in town for his long and consistent labours in the cause of temperance. Besides these there are meetings for men at St. Mary's, Church of England Men's Society at All Saints', clubs, etc., carrying on branches of social work.

The Acton Temperance Federation for some years held successful fêtes on August Bank Holiday, and has in many ways been a strong and successful opponent of the extension of drinking facilities, already too plentiful in the town. Mention



The High Street a few years ago.

may also be made of the Free Church Council, another influence for the promotion and maintenance of united action in matters for the welfare of the community.

In connection with it, a Girls' Guild has found a useful work in providing a place for recreation and social intercourse. But already many of the local efforts of this kind have been referred to in connection with an earlier section.

To return to the District Council—has it not had more than its just proportion of criticism? And are not public bodies very largely what they are expected to be?

In our estimate of men and movements, the basis of calculation as to what permanently serves the common good should not be an over appraisal of the dramatic, the sensational, or even the merely popular. If at the outset, it springs from sincere regard for the welfare of all, criticism, which has its use, but also its limitations, will be helpful, not destructive. Crude and superficial proposals hinder rather than help true progress, and are fruitless in comparison with those inspired by a generous patriotism, exercised with sound judgment and faith, able to wait but ready to act.

Residential and Environs.

VIII.

**D**URING the past twenty years the re-building of Acton as a modern suburban place of residence has steadily progressed. The speed was not rapid at first, but from the time of the builders' discovery that it was a desirable location, having the lowest death rate of any neighbourhood around London, it soon became overstocked with houses, built rather with a view to smallness of cost and the utilisation of the sand and gravel excavated on the sites, than to the attractiveness and convenience of the dwellings. Hence many smaller houses than usually have basements were so erected, which should have been placed above ground. Recovery from the set-back thus given to the place was very slow at first, but it has been much more rapid in the past few years.

Although it has lost by demolition or decay many of its ancient historic mansions, modern Acton has arisen, a place of pleasant, quiet residence, which has, in



Gunnersbury House, Acton.

some measure, been spared the weariness and monotony of interminable streets of houses exactly alike, so characteristic of many suburbs.

Amongst the limited number of the older mansions remaining, Gunnersbury Park, the seat of Leopold de Rothschild, Esq., is the most prominent.

In connection with the thoughtful and generous hospitality so frequently extended to benevolent and worthy objects by Mr. and Mrs. de Rothschild, the "Acton Press," on the occasion of the great gathering of two thousand guests to the International Congress of Women at Gunnersbury Park, gave some interesting particulars of the house and grounds, from which extracts are made:—

"Gunnersbury Park is called in the old records, of whose genuineness there is not much doubt, 'Gunyldebury,' so it is not improbable that at some very early period it was the residence of Gunyld (or Gunilda) a niece of King Canute, who was banished from England in the year 1044. This manor in the reign of Edward III.



was held for life by John Bray, under a grant from John Chephan, who in 1365 gave the reversion to Geoffry Schrop and his heirs in the forty-seventh year of King Edward's reign. We next trace this famous property in the hands of William Gresle, who, with others, granted the manor of Gunyldesbury (which had formerly belonged to John de North) to John Bernes and others as trustees, perhaps, for the celebrated Alice Perrers, whose property it appears to have been at the time of her banishment. She afterwards procured a remission of her sentence and married Sir William Wyndesor, to whom this manor was granted with other property, which she had enjoyed before her attainder. In the next century it belonged to Sir Thomas Frowyk, an alderman of London, who died in 1485 and was buried at Ealing.

His second son (Sir Thomas Frowyk) was born at Gunnersbury, and was known as a very eminent lawyer, afterwards becoming Lord Chief Justice of the



Gunnersbury Lawn and Flower Garden with House in the distance.

Common Pleas. He did not settle at Gunnersbury, but resided at Finchley. Gunnersbury House then descended to the daughter of his elder brother, Elizabeth, and when she married Sir John Spelman, one of the Judges of the King's Bench, in 1607, she took up her residence there. The next owner was the celebrated Sergeant Maynard, whose history discloses a very eventful career. He was thrice married, his last wife surviving his demise many years. The baptisms and burials of the members of Sir John Maynard's family are to be found in the parish registers.

After the death of Sir John Maynard the manor was for many years in the possession of his widow, who married Henry, Earl of Suffolk, who died at Gunnersbury Park in 1709. He was succeeded in the title by his eldest son who died there in 1718. Three years later the Countess Dowager died and Gunnersbury then became the property of Sir John Hobart. On his decease it went to Henry Turner, Esq., who died in 1756. In 1761 Gunnersbury Park was acquired as a summer

residence by the Princess Amelia, an aunt of King George III. Pursuant to her will it was again put up for sale in 1788 and purchased by Colonel Ironsides, who sold it again in 1792 to Sir Walter Stirling, Baronet, and Henry Crawford, Esq. It was purchased by a Mr. Walter Morley, a floorcloth manufacturer, in 1801 on speculation. He pulled down the fine mansion which had been erected in 1663 for Sergt. Maynard by Webb (son-in-law of Inigo Jones) and had the house sold piecemeal. The land, consisting of about seventy-six acres, was purchased by Alexander Copeland, Esq., who built a most handsome house in the Italian style for his own residence." After the death of Mr. Copeland, the estate was purchased but never occupied by Nathan Meyer Rothschild. Baron Lionel de Rothschild, resided at Piccadilly and Gunnersbury, which was the residence of his widow, the lamented Baroness, author of 'Addresses to Young Children,' who died in March, 1884. The property next passed into the hands of its present owner, Leopold de Rothschild, Esq.



The Old Gunnersbury House.

The mansion itself is of massive proportions, constructed with columns on the south-eastern front. The interior walls are ornamented with bas-reliefs, representing striking scenes taken from the history of Greece. The apartments are extremely convenient and excellently contrived—the hall very large, with columns on each side, from whence ascends a noble flight of stairs to a spacious saloon. From this room there is the entry to the portico which is supported by columns. There are fine paintings, statues, and a magnificent collection of china. One painting is of great interest, the introduction of the late Baron into the House of Commons by Lord Russell and Captain Bernal Osborne, on its own resolution in the year 1858; and among the occupants of the front benches on either side are Lord Palmerston, Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Gladstone, Sir G. Lewis, Lord Stanley, and other celebrities of the day.



An interesting object is the stone archway in the park added as an ornament by the Princess Amelia when she resided there. The grounds have no equal for many miles around. There are noble trees, abundance of flowers, well kept lawns and paths with lakes and temples, skilful landscape gardening, and an extensive prospect extending away southward to the Surrey hills.

But an account of this celebrated seat would not be complete without some reference to the great world citizen, its present owner, and to the narrative of the rise of the house of his name. Neither has the old story of its origin lost its usefulness, indicating, as it does, many of the qualities of character essential to high attainment, whether financial, commercial, or of any other kind. The historical sketches of this remarkable family—which is without rival or parallel in its financial influence, the magnitude of its transactions, and its united action through successive generations—is usually traced back to Meyer Amschel Rothschild the



The Lawn—Gunnerybury.

founder of the great fortunes of the house. He was the son of Amschel Moses Rothschild who had a small business in Frankfort.

"In the year 1743, in the little Jewish settlement in Frankfort-on-the-Maine," runs an account which appeared in the year 1848, was "born of poor but worthy parents, Mayer Anselm [Amschel] Rothschild, the founder of the famous House. His parents gave him what education their small means would permit, but dying when he was the age of eleven, left him to his own resources. He then earned a scanty living by writing, which he soon abandoned for a trade. But his ambition was to be a priest of his religion. This was not accomplished. His trade required him to travel; and after some years he returned to his native place and established a small business. He soon, however, gained considerable notoriety as a collector of old and curious coins, which brought him much in contact with persons of rank, among whom it was fashionable to make such collections; and finally he went to Hanover



as a clerk in a large house. Subsequently, with a few years' savings, he returned to Frankfort, married, and commenced a little exchange business. His great sagacity, strict punctuality, and rectitude of conduct, pushed him rapidly forward, and towards the close of the century the Frankfort banking-house had become famous, and the profits large.

The banker, in the meantime, brought up ten children, of whom five sons were 'after his own heart,' and when he died he left them his vast wealth and extensive business, with the injunction to dwell in strict and unbroken unity. And the injunction then bestowed has been faithfully carried out.

The five sons conducted as many banking-houses in the leading capitals of Europe. They were as follows:—The eldest, Anselm [Amschel], was born in 1773, and was the most substantial citizen of Frankfort, and, representing the father, was the



The Terrace, Gunnersbury Park.

head of the whole operations of the house. The second, Solomon, born in 1774, became a citizen of Vienna, where," says this old account, "he is held in high estimation as a man, as well as a member of the most stupendous banking-house in the world. The fourth son, Charles [or Karl], was born in 1778, and has since 1821, conducted the house of Naples, where his popularity is equal to any of his brothers. The youngest son, Jacob, was born in 1792, and is the banker in Paris, where he maintains a splendour that eclipses most of the princes of Europe. The third son we have yet to mention, Nathan, who was born in 1777, became the head of the London house in 1798, and was in every intellectual respect, a giant. It was observed of him, that should he share in the chase, it could only be to hunt elephants.

These five houses, combining all the financial resources of Europe in their movements, which are always simultaneous, have exercised for fifty years a power,



The Lake and Temple, Gunnersbury Park.

unseen, but overwhelming. Most of the government debts of Europe have been contracted by means of loans from this great House. Although their residences were always widely separated, each controlling all means of information, no important transaction was entered into without consultation and strict harmony of opinion amongst them all."

More startling than romance is the record of the great attainments of Nathan Meyer Rothschild [1777-1836], founder of the London business, whose fine portrait reveals the strong character which worthily inspired confidence and became a stay to so many governments; whose counsel was sought by our own, and by the great Duke of Wellington. His belief in England, consistently acted upon, was rewarded by a great reliance being placed in his judgment. Amongst his many great undertakings he was concerned in the promotion of the Alliance Insurance Company, in the abolition of the political disabilities of the Jews, and he it was who acquired Gunnersbury House. Although he never assumed the title he was made a baron of the Austrian Empire in 1822. His second son, Sir Anthony de Rothschild was created a baronet in 1847, the title passing to his nephew the first Lord Rothschild.

Hannah the only child of "Baron Meyer,"



The Original Rothschild's House.  
Frankfort-on-Main.

fourth son of Nathan Meyer Rothschild, married the present Earl of Rosebery. She died in 1890, and, like many members of the family, was buried in the Jewish cemetery at Willesden.

It remained however for Nathan Meyer Rothschild's eldest son, Baron Lionel Nathan who was born at Newcourt in 1808, to obtain for English Jews the full privileges of citizenship and the right to sit in the House of Commons, which was so long resisted by the House of Lords. The House of Commons having for the

tenth time passed an oath's bill which the Lords only accepted after rejecting the portion affecting the Jews and the Commons disagreeing with this amendment, the deadlock was only eventually overcome by the passage through both houses of a bill giving to each House of Parliament the right to determine the form of oath for its own members. This result, after eleven years of struggle, enabled Baron Lionel to take his seat in the House. He had a family of three sons and two daughters. Nathaniel Meyer de Rothschild the eldest son was in 1885 created a baron of the United Kingdom. The third of Baron Nathan Rothschild's three sons, Leopold de Rothschild, Esq., is the most closely associated with Acton, living for a great part of the year at Gunnersbury Park.



Nathan Meyer Rothschild. Founder of the English Banking House.

Corresponding to its great fame and untold wealth, has been the well considered and large hearted philanthropy of this famous house; and the thoughtful kindness and generosity of the owner of Gunnersbury Park is too well known to need special reference. To him and to Mrs. Leopold de Rothschild the town has been indebted for gracious hospitality frequently extended and other instances in abundance of timely consideration, also for their personal influence in the forward work of Education, Hospitals,





Twyford Avenue, Acton.

Housing and other social and philanthropic service. A happy event of the present season was the marriage of their son, Mr. Lionel de Rothschild.

Nearest to the neighbourhood of Gunnersbury Park is Mill Hill Park, one of the first portions of the town considerably built upon for residential purposes; and many very pleasantly situated houses are to be found in Avenue Gardens, Heathfield Road, and Avenue Crescent; but the proximity of the laundry industry on

the south limited the area available here.

Across Gunnersbury Lane and westward to the Acton boundary the space has been rapidly filled up with a good type of medium sized houses, in a very pleasant situation and convenient to the lines of tramway which border this section on the northern side. A number of Acton's professional men reside in this locality. Crossing the Ealing and Uxbridge Road are Twyford Crescent and the Methodist parsonage; Twyford Avenue, where some members of the District Council reside — a wide and shady avenue more nearly corresponding to the open attractiveness of a modern Canadian city, like Toronto, than any avenue of our town. Farther on are Creffield, Rosemont, and Creswick Roads, and the open pleasant neighbourhood of Springfield Park. In this locality are a number of attractive residences, with their own pleasure grounds, gardens, etc.; and amongst its residents of some years standing are such well known and esteemed townsmen as R. O. Davies, Esq., J.P., Percy Barlow, Esq., J.P., late M.P. for Bedford, and, until recently, the Rev. Wm. Bolton, M.A.,



"The Elms," Acton.



Creswick Road, Acton.

the last Chairman of the late School Board and first Chairman of the Acton Education Committee, also F. A. Baldwin, Esq., and R. Poulton, Esq., ex-Chairmen of the Acton District Council, F. Cook, Esq., and others.

"Grasgarth," the home of R. O. Davies, Esq., whose interest in the welfare and progress of the town is well known, is one of the most pleasant residences in the district. The gardens and grounds are conveniently situated in the rear, and to the west of the house are many pleasant shady walks beneath rows of ancient elms.

A little further west one of the more recently erected residences is "Torkington," the home of Percy Barlow, Esq. It is very pleasantly situated on Creswick Road surrounded with trees and gardens and having across the road further gardens, playground, etc. "Edendale," the residence of James Hornby, Esq., with delightful surroundings, is also situated upon this road.

Due north of Springfield Park, over the main line of the Great Western Railway, a new district has been recently opened and promises to become an attractive place of residence near to the new athletic fields and the North Acton Park.

The Rectory, the residence of the Rev. G. S. De Sausmarez, M.A., stands almost in the centre of the town, a large squarely built house already referred to in an earlier section. Formerly there were nearly opposite to it "Acton House" and "Derwentwater House"; both now removed for the erection of shops or business premises, while their grounds have been utilized for a number of streets of terrace houses. Near by is Newburgh Road, for many years a very retired spot. Farther



Torkington, Residence of Percy Barlow, Esq., J.P.



Gragarth, Residence of R. O. Davies, Esq., J.P.





Springfield Cottage—a bit of Old Acton, corner of Horn Lane and Creswick Road recently removed.

town. Branching out from Horn Lane are streets of residential flats and medium sized houses.

The name of this old road 'Horn Lane' leading from Acton to Willesden, or, to use the old Roman landmark terms, from the "Steyne" at Acton to "Herulvestone," Harlesden, is said to have derived its name from the quantities of antlers and horns found along its course when it was made. It follows the course of the upper end of the Stamford Brook, and this old tradition of its naming suggests the thought of dwellers of a remote period finding along the banks of the stream convenient spots for the slaughter and feasting upon their game.

along Horn Lane are "Springfield House," the residence of Mrs. Stewart, "Chesterfield Lodge," the residence of Walter Adam Brown, Esq., and some of the larger terraces of the



Creswick Road.



Highlands Avenue, Acton.

A picturesque new communication between this district and Cumberland Park is called the Highlands Avenue. The Cumberland Park Estate stands upon some of the highest ground in Acton and is generally upon a gravel soil, although this does not apply strictly to the whole of it. It was opened up some years ago, and has some good houses of both older and modern construction.

Many of the houses in this district have very good gardens. Adjoining on the east are the lands of the Goldsmith Estate, giving the name formerly to Goldsmith Gardens now called Cumberland Park, Goldsmith Avenue, etc., and extending over a great deal of East Acton, which retains a considerable number of its characteristic features as a pleasant residential neighbourhood.



Horn Lane, Acton.



Acacia Road, Acton.

Many other streets and avenues might be mentioned, as for instance, Perryn Road, Shaa Road and Churchfield Road East, where many good residences are found, and where there is still the atmosphere of quiet and rest; while directly south of the Acton Park is "Grosvenor House," the residence of Edward Monson, Esq., J.P., another ex-Chairman of the District Council. Within the limits of this brief sketch of residential Acton, reference is generally confined to the older sections, and to the locations of some of our best known residents; but by the opening of fresh estates, particularly on the north-west, already other neighbourhoods are developing, where convenient houses at reasonable rents and in healthy open surroundings are to be found. At the same time, railway and tram communications with the City or the West End are frequent and very reasonable in cost.

These facilities, the general healthfulness of the place, and the splendid equipment of the whole town, with schools suited to all classes, and unsurpassed



Churchfield Road East.

by those of any suburb or neighbourhood around London, make the place additionally attractive as a centre for elementary, secondary or technical education.

The opening of the new estate between East Acton and the Uxbridge Road has been proceeding slowly, but will develop a convenient new residential neighbourhood. Immediately south of the Uxbridge Road the motor car industries have established extensive factories, and with the printing, dyeing and other works in the locality, make a large demand for houses for their employees, met in some measure by the extensive house building during the past few years upon Southfield Road and the new streets communicating thereto. Another portion largely occupied by artisan houses is the extreme north-eastern part of the district by Willesden Junction; while the laundry industry is chiefly located in the south-western section of the town.





"Gaspereau" Garden, Cumberland Park.



Cumberland Park, Acton, in Winter.

Bedford Park as a residential district stands almost by itself on the south-eastern boundary. Its seclusion, while still easily reached by late trains from the City and the West End, has made it a favourite resort and place of residence for some sections of the world of art and letters in recent years, as well as during a considerably earlier period. As already mentioned, Nichols, the antiquary, died here in 1863, and Dr. Lindley, the naturalist, in 1865. Bedford Park is included in the postal area of Chiswick, but it is actually a part of Acton Parish. It has some attractive suburban residences, and many have found this a pleasant retreat from the City.

The style of architecture generally employed throughout a considerable portion of the district is of the Queen Anne character. Here is "Oulart," the residence of A. W. W. King, Esq., late Chairman of the Acton Urban District Council. The late Howard Unwin, whose devoted work for the neighbouring Polytechnic and other causes, will be remembered, was also one of its well known residents. In connection with local artists, one who resided in Mill Hill Road was Mr. Davey, whose etching of an ancient oak formerly at the end of Twyford Avenue has been shown. Another, celebrated as a sculptor, was the late John Adams-Acton, one of whose paintings is in the possession of R. O. Davies, Esq. At the time of Mr. Adams-Acton's death, the *Gazette* of 4th November, 1910, gave the following sketch of him:—

"The death is announced of Mr. John Adams-Acton, the well known and once popular sculptor, at Brodick, in the Isle of Arran. Mr. Adams-Acton took the second part of his name from the place of his birth. He was educated at Lady



Manor Lodge, formerly the residence of Alderman G. Wright, Esq., J.P.





Peeps in Bedford Park, Acton.

Byron's School, Ealing. At first a pupil of Timothy Butler, he later entered the Academy Schools, where he took first medals in the antique and life classes, the gold medal for an original sculpture group, and a Travelling Studentship. Under the presidency of Sir Charles Eastlake he was sent to Rome, where he entered the studio of Gibson, who was a pupil of Thorwaldsen and Canova. Mr. Adams-Acton's



"Oulart," Residence of A. W. W. King, Esq., J.P.





The Chapel, Twyford Abbey.

work in general showed the influence of his master. He fulfilled many important public commissions, among them being busts of Queen Victoria and the late King Edward as Prince of Wales, a colossal statue of Sir Titus Salt, statues of Gladstone for Liverpool and Blackburn, and one of Lord Beaconsfield. His two best known works in London are his Wesley in Westminster Abbey, and Cruickshank in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Mr. Adams-Acton from a lad gave great proof of what he might become. Mr. Wm. Antrobus, the son of a rector of Acton, was much interested in him, and was most anxious that he should study in Rome. He resided for some time with his mother at one of the cottages at

Acton Hill, now cleared away for the thoroughfare of Chatsworth Gardens. The baptismal register of the Acton Church (St. Mary's) records his birth and baptism in the year 1831."

At the opposite side of Acton in the extreme north-western part of the parish is situated one of the remaining picturesque features of the past, the old Twyford Abbey. A little chapel standing outside the grounds and approached by a roadway was for many years unused and had its windows boarded up, presenting a very deserted appearance. The Abbey itself, which was formerly in private possession, is now in the occupation of the Brothers of St. Alexius. "They are devoted" says a writer recently in the *Acton Gazette*, "to the nursing of the sick, the nervous, the paralysed, and sometimes the eccentric. There are up to a hundred large rooms for boarders here, and five or six dining-rooms. The brothers wait on the boarders like military orderlies, and attend them with the greatest assiduity, the sick and the infirm, each one in his own room away from friction of any kind. Members of the best families in the land are sometimes to be found in these houses. Creed, or religion,



Twyford Abbey, Acton.

or rank, makes no difference. When one sees a sturdy old Protestant complacently jibing a simple-minded lay brother attending him, one seems to forget that there ever existed a Smithfield or a battle of the Boyne."

The walls of the abbey are covered with beautiful clematis, wisteria, and wild roses that send their branches through the window frames, and perfume the large airy rooms.

Whether viewed from the road passing from Willesden to Hanger Hill, or from the grounds, the castellated building of the abbey standing in ample and pleasantly laid out grounds, still presents a picture of solitary stateliness; the advance of modern buildings not having yet extended thus far.

To the west of Twyford Abbey and Hanger Hill on the high ground in the



Twyford Abbey, Acton.

northern part of Ealing is Castle Bar, on the old maps put down as "Castle Bear." It has some very delightfully situated and pleasant residences; and here it was that Edward Duke of Kent was for some years the owner of Kent Lodge. "Although," says Mr. Colin E. Reader, a former resident of Ealing, "there is a Queen's Walk and Victoria Road close by, our late Queen was never there. After the Duke's death when the Queen was eight months old, the property was sold and a new house built." It is also said that the sale of the property was several years before the birth of Queen Victoria. Further over and to the north in the fertile valley which was long famous in generations past for its great wheatfields, were the

“Perivale” and other lands lying between the Harrow ridge and “Castle Bear” and the higher lands of Harlesden and Hanger Hill. Of this locality Michael Drayton’s “Polybion” (A.D. 1612) thus quaintly discourses :

“ As Colne come on along, and chanc’t to cast her eye  
 Upon that neighbouring Hill where Harrow stands so hie,  
 She Peryvale perceiv’d prankt up with wreaths of wheat,  
 And with exulting tearmes thus glorying in her feat ;  
 Why should I not be coy, and of my Beauties nice,  
 Since this my goodly graine is held of greatest price ?  
 No manchet can so well the courtly palat please,  
 As that made of the Meale fetcht from my fertill Leaze.  
 Their finest of that kind, compared with my wheate,  
 For whitenesse of the Bread, doth look like common Cheese.  
 What Barly is there found, whose faire and bearded eare,  
 Makes stouter English Ale, or stronger English Beere. ?  
 The Oate, the Beane, and Pease, with me but Pulses are ;  
 The,coarse and browner Rye, no more than Fitch and Tare.



Photo]

On the borders of North Acton.

[Austin.

What seed doth any soyle in England bring, that I  
 Beyond her most increase yet cannot multiply.  
 Besides my sure abode next goodly London is,  
 To vent my fruitfull store, that me doth never misse.  
 And those poore baser things, they cannot put away,  
 How ere I set my price, nere on my chapmen stay.”

These celebrated fields were well cultivated, and doubtless supplied with corn the various windmills situated on the higher positions, a number of which have handed down their characteristic names, as Mill Hill, Hendon, and Mill Hill, Acton. S. D. Clippingdale, M.D., F.R.C.S., in an interesting paper on West London Rivers, also referring to Drayton’s work, says :—“In the days of Queen Elizabeth the corn grown at Perivale was accounted the finest in England. In the time of James I., John Norden, the historian and surveyor, describes the fertility of Middlesex in the following quaint manner : ‘The soil of Middlesex is excellent, fat and fertile, and full of profite ; it yeldeth corne and graine not only in abundance,



but most excellent good wheat, especially about Heston, which place may be called '*Granarium tritici regalis*' from the singularity of the corne. The vains of this especiall corne seemeth to extend from Heston to Harrow between which, as in the midway, is Perivale. Yet doth not this so fruitful soyle yield comfort to the way-faring man in winter time, by reason of the claish nature of the soyle which, after it hath tasted of the summer showers, waxeth both dirtie and deep, but unto the countrie swain, it is a sweet and pleasant garden in regard to his hope of future profite, for—

The deep and dirtie loathsome soyle  
Yields golden grain to painful toyle."

To make one further quotation, John Speed thus describes Middlesex in his "Theatre of the World," A.D. 1676 :—"In form it is almost square, for Air passing temperate, for Soil abundantly fertile, and for Pasture and Grain of all kinds, yielding the best; so that the Wheat of this Country hath served a long time for the Manchet to our Prince's table."

At the time of the taking down of Derwentwater House, Mr. Henry Mitchell writing to the *Acton Gazeite* of the earlier days of our neighbourhood, quoted from



[Photo]

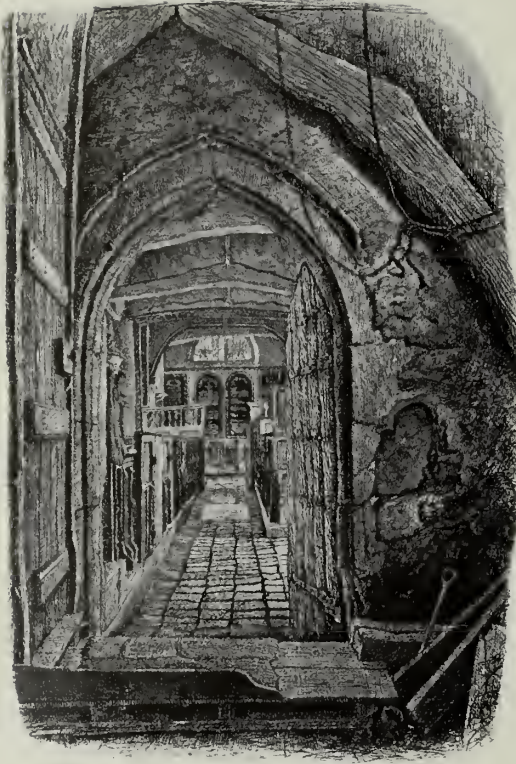
Solitude at North Acton.

[Austin.]

a poetical effort of one of our rectors and said :—"Referring to Acton House as being let furnished during the summer months, it would seem that it was always easy to get a tenant, the pretty rural village with its many country walks, pleasant fields, green lanes, and salubrious air making it an ideal summer retreat. Dr. Cobden, rector 1726-1764, writing probably to a new-comer, says :—

' Since Providence is pleased to bless  
Your State with plenty to excess,  
And you can no provision want  
Which Nature craves or Heaven can grant.  
Give over all the busy care  
Of gain, and with despatch repair  
To Acton for untainted air;  
There happy in your rural seat,  
Where nobles gladly might retreat,

Who tho' in haste their chariots stay  
Envyng, yet pleased, while they survey  
Those undisturbed in calm repose  
Regain the health in town you lose.  
Why with vexation should you waste  
A life that hurries on too fast?  
Why hardly breathe in stench and noise  
When Paradise is in your choice? "



Interior Perivale Church.  
From an old print.

One of the quaint and picturesque relics of primitive days in this once fertile wheatbelt of Perivale is the rustic old church, nestling in the valley amidst ancient elms, with a heavy overhanging roof low down upon its walls, making the interior of the Church even upon a sunny day to have a deeper shade than the usual dim religious light of many of the older Churches. Its antique wooden boarded belfry with old tiled cottage roof stands at the end of the Church where, beneath the rugged elms

"Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,  
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep."

With the kind permission of the Rector an attempt was made to photograph the interior of the old church, but the depth of its gloom proved too much for the success of the effort. Many pleasant pilgrimages are made to this spot, and it will repay the visitor, fond of exercise, who will find it within walking distance of Acton.

On the other side of the town the proximity of Acton to the river adds much to its pleasantness as a place of residence. Only about five minutes' ride on the train is required to reach Kew Bridge, where boats are available for rowing parties; or it is a pleasant walk over the river to the celebrated Kew Gardens. In place of the

high old bridge which remained until a few years ago, there is now a graceful new structure known as "King Edward VII. Bridge," which the late King and Queen Alexandra, formally opened on the 20th of May, 1903.

This is the third of the three bridges successively built between Brentford and Kew. The first bridge seems to date back to the time of King Charles I. In the brochure issued at the opening ceremony it is stated in reference to the first bridge, "that a Royal grant was made to a person of the name of Thornton for the exclusive right to establish a Horse Ferry from Brentford to Kew; that Thornton continued to enjoy this privilege until the death of Charles I.; that soon after that event a person of the name of Tunstall, who was attached to the Commonwealth, set up an opposition ferry which was vainly endeavoured to be put down by Thornton, whose Royal Grant, at that time, availed him nothing; that after the Restoration, Thornton's right was re-established and Tunstall was obliged to give up his Ferry. Tunstall subsequently purchased the grant and privilege, as regards the Ferry, from Thornton. The Ferry continued in Tunstall's family until one of his descendants, Robert Tunstall, in the reign of George II., obtained an Act of Parliament to build a wooden bridge (in lieu of the Ferry), with power to levy tolls for its use.



At this time Frederick, Prince of Wales, held a lease of the property now forming a portion of Kew Gardens, which was afterwards purchased by George III.

Owing, however, to objections being raised that the bridge if built upon the site proposed would interfere with the navigation, the powers were withdrawn and a subsequent Act obtained authorising the construction of the bridge in a more convenient position. The main portion was constructed of wood." The work was begun in 1758 and completed in 1759 under the supervision of John Barnard. "It remained in use for nearly thirty years, when in 1782, an Act was obtained by



Perivale Church.

Robert Tunstall, son of the previous owner, for the construction of a stone bridge to replace it.

This second bridge, which has only recently been removed, is said to have been begun on 24th June 1783, and was thrown open to the public on 22nd September, 1789, the anniversary of the King's Coronation."

It was designed by Mr. James Paine. The bridge was sold by Tunstall in 1819 by auction to Mr. G. Robinson for £22,000, who retained it till 1873 as a toll bridge, when it was purchased by a joint committee of the Corporation of London





King Edward VII. Bridge, Kew.

having at one end the arms of Middlesex and at the other those of Surrey, and modelled allegorical groups representing "Father Thames" and "Progress," was presented to His Majesty King Edward VII.

There are many beautiful walks in the Kew Gardens, some of the least frequented of which are perhaps the most attractive. One very unfrequently taken by visitors, is that which keeps clear of the centre of the Gardens, and takes the outer course to the right after entering by the main gateway from Kew Green. This leads through large timber and well wooded portions. First, making towards the river, Kew House is passed, once the residence of King George III. and Queen Charlotte. This is the place where Queen Charlotte

and the Metropolitan Board of Works for £57,000, and made free to the public. It was subsequently maintained as a county bridge jointly by the counties of Middlesex and Surrey.

The third and present King Edward bridge, which consists of three elliptical arches, was built under an Act of Parliament of 1898. The engineers were Sir John Wolfe Barry, K.C.B., and Cuthbert A. Brereton, Esq., the contract being carried out by Mr. Easton Gibb. At the opening ceremony, a solid silver gilt casket, designed and manufactured by the Goldsmiths and Silversmiths Company, Ltd.,



The Queen's Cottage, Kew Gardens.

died. Here may be seen many royal relics, and the apartments used by the King and Queen. Further on is another very interesting place—a thatched cottage in which the late Queen Victoria as a child spent many months of her life. It is called “The Queen’s Cottage,” but is not thrown open to the public, and can only be seen at a distance of a few hundred yards through the open iron railings. The walk described leads round by unfrequented lakes, the haunt of ducks and other wild fowl, and so on, to the Chinese Pagoda. The return may be along the opposite side and through more familiar parts. The extensive houses of tropical trees, plants, and flowers, the interesting collections of specimens, the museums, the lakes and pleasant walks are too familiar to need even a reference.



A Thunder Storm in 1903 photographed at Midnight.  
reproduced without any retouching.

Richmond lies a little further along, with its magnificent views from the terrace overlooking the beautiful woodlands of Surrey, part of which has been recently secured for the public by the united action of Middlesex and Surrey. This Richmond Hill view was in great danger of being lost and a sum of £70,000 had to be raised to preserve it. Fortunately the county of London took over the burden of raising the greater portion of the amount and the view was saved, preserving to posterity the charming woodlands which make this such a favoured resort to weary dwellers in the great Metropolis, and even to those in the crowded suburban districts. It may be remarked that at the opening of the Richmond Hill view, one of the heavy thunder storms for which the year 1903 was specially remarkable, swept down



Stabling of the Old Pigeon's Inn, Brentford, frequented by Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. Etched by W. N. Wilkins, 1848.

the river, deluging the district, and preventing many who otherwise would have taken part in the interesting ceremony from being present. The downpour of rain



The River, near Kew Bridge.





Pope's Villa, Twickenham, from a print published in 1811.

through Richmond was especially heavy, filling the District Railway, so that the railway lines there were some inches under water. Not only was the heavy rainfall of this summer remarkable, but also the prevalence of thunder and lightning. A photograph taken at midnight, by the plate being left exposed for an instant, reproduces the flashes of lightning shooting across the sky, sufficiently illuminating the whole of the landscape to make the negative, and to show trees and buildings standing out sharp and clear in the flash, although the night was very dark.



Hampton Court Palace in the early Victorian era.



Syon House, near Brentford.

On the Richmond Hill may be seen a tablet noting the fact that Thomson, the author of "The Seasons," frequently found his way there, and enjoyed this magnificent view.

Adjoining Acton is the old capital town of Brentford, named probably from the fact that, at this point, the Thames was fordable, and, as already noted, was evidently the spot where Julius Cæsar in his second invasion crossed it. This supposition is favoured by the British name "Breninford, i.e. the King's road or way . . . . for the name, even if it should not apply personally to Cæsar, establishes the fact that this part of the Thames was known to and used by the Britons as a ford."

Implements and weapons of the stone, bronze, and iron ages are found in this neighbourhood. Here in 1016 Edmund Ironsides defeated the Danes. The low flat country around Brentford made it a favourite drive of King George III., reminding him of his own country of Hanover. Here were many stirring times at Elections in the days of John Wilkes. Next to Brentford is Isleworth, a place of great antiquity given in the Domesday Book as "Ghistelworde," but with slight historical records, although Simon de Montfort and the barons encamped here in 1263, and in 1647 General Fairfax at the head of the Parliamentary Army for a time made it his headquarters.

At a little greater distance up the river remain the interesting villa of the poet Pope at Twickenham, and other historical houses, with Hampton Court Palace beyond, each making a pleasant excursion from Acton. Between Isleworth and Brentford in former times there existed the convent and monastery of Syon having accommodation for sixty sisters and twenty-five brothers of the Order of St. Bridget. It is said that it stood at the head of convents for females, both in respect of its wealth, its learning, and its piety, and for a century and a quarter it had a prosperous existence. The estates of these "Daughters of Syon" were scattered over the country from St. Michael's Mount, near Land's End, to Windermere and the Lakes. When suppressed by King Henry VIII. their income was equivalent to about £20,000, or about £250 for each member of the community.

The site is now occupied by Syon House, the seat of the Duke of Northumberland, in whose family it has been ever since the suppression of the nunnery. The present Duke is further connected with this locality as an alderman of our Middlesex County Council.

South-west is Osterley Park, the seat of the Earl of Jersey, which in Queen

Elizabeth's time was the property of Sir Thomas Gresham, knight, citizen, and merchant adventurer, who founded the Royal Exchange. He was visited there by the Queen in 1578. Of this visit it is said:— "Her Majesty having given it as her opinion that the court before the house would look better divided with a wall, Sir Thomas Gresham in the night sent for workmen to London, who so speedily and so silently performed their task, that before morning the wall was finished, to the great surprise of the Queen and her courtiers, one of whom, however, observed that it was no wonder that he who could build a change should so soon change a building."

There may be many who see the large gilded vane in the form of a grasshopper on the Royal Exchange who have not heard the old story of its origin, as told to a child:— "About three hundred and fifty years ago, a woman with a little baby in her arms, was trudging along a country lane.

Presently, after looking to see that no one was watching her, she climbed over a gate into the field, and wrapping the little baby in its shawl, she laid it down in the grass so gently as not to awake it and then, never even looking behind her, she climbed over the gate again into the lane and went on her journey. The baby soon awoke, and began to cry; and it cried for a long, long time. At last, tired and hungry, and hot with the sun, for it was a fine summer's day, it was wearied out, and dropped off to sleep again.

'But God had heard the voice of the lad,' and see how simply He brought help for the little one. By and by down the lane came a schoolboy. He lived at the farmhouse a little way further up the lane. Now he gathered a few flowers, now he scampered after a butterfly, now he had a shy at a bird, but just as he came to the gate over which the woman had climbed he heard a grasshopper chirping away so loudly that he sprang over to catch him, and there was the baby fast asleep. Far more pleased than if he had caught a hundred grasshoppers, the boy took up the little fellow and ran home with his prize. The kind farmer's wife, although she had many children of her own, at once determined to keep the little orphan who had been saved from death by a grasshopper. Years passed away and the baby became a strong boy; the boy grew to be a man, went to London and became a merchant. God blessed all he did, and he became a great man. When Sir



Syon House from the river.



Thomas Gresham founded the Royal Exchange the Queen came to dine with him and to lay the first stone; and there upon the topmost pinnacle where it may be seen to-day, Sir Thomas, it is said, placed the weathercock like a monster grasshopper."

On the 1st of June, 1904, there was opened to the public an exceedingly interesting house, but a short distance from Acton, which may be visited on the payment of a small fee. This is the famous old house of William Hogarth, the Artist and Caricaturist at Chiswick, presented to the County Council of Middlesex by Lieut.-Colonel Shipway, V.D.

Although this relic of the stirring times of the great "Pictorial moralist and satirist" has been preserved from demolition, it suffers from the sweep westward of the Metropolis, and the fact of its existence is perhaps even to-day quite unknown to many. It stands within a high brick wall enclosing an old fashioned garden and the historical "Mulberry Tree." Inside are gathered specimens of antique furniture typical of Hogarth's time, the lead vases which once stood upon the square high gate piers, and a valuable collection of the artist's prints which have been generously included in the above gift by Colonel Shipway.

A brass tablet has the following record of the saving of this old building from destruction:—

"This House was purchased in 1902 by Lieut.-Col. Robert Shipway in order to save it from being demolished, and by restoring the building, he has preserved it to the Nation and to the Art World in memory of the Genius that once lived and worked within its walls."

William Hogarth was born in London on November 10th, 1698. His father—Richard Hogarth—the son of a yeoman of Bampton, near Kendal, was a schoolmaster who had come to London from Westmoreland to better his fortunes. Here he became a corrector of the press. Young William's education was rather neglected and when he was fifteen, to his great delight, he left school and was apprenticed to a silver-plate engraver. During this period, the lad became conscious that he could do better work than spend his days copying initials and crests. He began to make sketches of the grotesque in life—a famous one of that time being the sketch he made of a brawl at a Highgate tavern. This has since been lost. As soon as his apprenticeship was ended, Hogarth went to study drawing from life at an academy in St. Martin's Lane, to gain further knowledge which might help him in designing his engravings. Hitherto his work had been to copy coats of arms, etc., upon copper, but when he was twenty-seven years of age his first original plate was published. It was called "Masquerades and Operas," a satire on the follies of the day. At this time Hogarth went to an academy which was opened by an eminent artist—Sir James Thornhill. A few years later the pupil ran off with Sir James' only daughter—then barely eighteen. The marriage was a stolen one and consequently without the approval of Sir James and Lady Thornhill, who, considering the youth of their daughter and the slender finances of her husband, as yet an obscure artist, were not easily reconciled to the match. This acted as a spur to Hogarth, leading to fresh efforts as a painter, and, following other works, he soon began his "Harlot's Progress" in which is depicted the history in colours of a simple girl conducted through all the vicissitudes of wretchedness to a premature death.

Hogarth's young wife now contrived to have some of her husband's pictures brought before her father by having them placed in his dining-room. This proved a successful means towards removing the estrangement. When Sir James realized

that it was his son-in-law who had painted the "Harlot's Progress" he became more favourably disposed toward him. Of this incident an old chronicler of 1781 writes: "He enquired from whence the pictures came, and being told by whom they were introduced, he cried out 'Very well, the man who can produce representations like these can also maintain a wife without a portion.' He designed this remark as an excuse for keeping his purse-strings close; but soon after became both reconciled and generous to the young couple."

This was the beginning of Hogarth's career as a great moral painter. So popular were the series that in 1735 he painted another graphic drama, "The



William Hogarth and his dog "Trump."

Rake's Progress." He also painted a few pictures on religious subjects, such as "The Pool of Bethesda," and "The Good Samaritan," which were done for St. Bartholomew's Hospital, but were not very successful, for the great talent of this artist lay in his power to portray the every-day life of the time in such a way as to bring out its weaknesses.

In 1746 he painted David Garrick, the actor, in his character of "Richard III." in the tent scene. Of this Hogarth writes, "For the portrait of Mr. Garrick . . . I was paid two hundred pounds (which was more than any English artist ever received for a single portrait), and that too by the sanction of several painters who

had been previously consulted about the price, which was not given without mature consideration."

Perhaps one of the best known of his pictures is that of himself and his pet dog, "Trump," now in the National Gallery.

In 1753 Hogarth was appointed Sergeant Painter to the King. This brought him in £10 annually. But although the salary was so small, the post was one of value, as it brought him in commissions of at least £200 a year. One of the greatest of satirists and moralists, who, with the "lash of caricature" corrected many worldly vices and weaknesses, he well illustrated the truth of the lines:—

" Those not to be reclaimed  
By softer methods must be made ashamed."

His last days were not as peaceful as they might have been, for he published a print entitled "The Times," and thereby made many enemies in the party political world. Nothing came of the quarrel except that his biting prints gained a large sale.

In 1762 Hogarth's strength began to fail owing to internal trouble, aggravated by the worry of the strife. During his last year he foresaw his near end, and busied himself retouching many of his plates, and painted one more picture called "Finis." Such it proved to be, for he never took pen or pencil again, and a month later, on the very night of his removal from Chiswick to his house in Leicester Fields, he passed away. His body was interred in the Chiswick Churchyard, where, upon a monument erected to his memory, he was apostrophized by his old friend the celebrated David Garrick in the following lines:—

<p>" Farewell, great Painter of Mankind, Who reached the noblest point of Art, Whose pictur'd Morals chain the Mind And, through the eye, correct the Heart.</p>	<p>If genius fire thee, Reader, stay, If nature touch thee drop a tear, If neither move thee turn away, For Hogarth's honoured dust lies here."</p>
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Fielding, who lived at Acton, writes of Hogarth:—"He who should call the ingenious Hogarth a burlesque painter, would, in my opinion, do him very little honour; for sure it is much easier, much less the subject of admiration, to paint a man with a nose, or any other feature of a preposterous size, or to expose him in some absurd or monstrous attitude, than to express the affections of men on canvas. It hath been thought a vast commendation of a painter to say his figures seem to breathe; but surely it is a much greater and nobler applause, that they appear to think."

Later, Mr. Haley in a tribute to Romney the painter, incidentally mentions Fielding, and thus refers to Hogarth:—

<p>" A separate province 'twas thy praise to rule; Self-formed thy Pencil! yet thy works a School, Where strongly painted, in gradations nice, The pomp of folly, and the shame of vice, Reach'd thro' the laughing eye the mended Mind, And moral Humour sportive Art Refin'd.</p>	<p>While fleeting Manners, as minutely shown As the clear prospect on the mirror thrown; While Truth of Character, exactly hit, And drest in all the dyes of comic wit; While these, in <i>Fielding's</i> page, delight supply, So long thy Pencil with his Pen shall vie.</p>
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Science with grief beheld thy drooping age  
Fall the sad victim of a Poet's rage;  
But Wit's vindictive spleen, that mocks control,  
Nature's high tax on luxury of soul!  
This both in Bards and Painters, Fame forgives;  
Their Frailty's buried, but their genius lives."

Referring again to the old tile roofed brick house, with its "projecting bay window overlooking the garden, and catching the last rays of the setting sun," it will well repay a visit; and many may wish to procure a copy of "Hogarth and His House," a short appreciation of the artist by the late Mr. F. W. Peel.\*

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\* It may be purchased from the Middlesex County Council, Guildhall, Westminster, or at the Hogarth House.



In reference to the restored living-room on the ground level and to Hogarth's hospitality, Mr. Peel writes :—"We can almost feel the presence of his friends Garrick, Fielding and Townley, and in the garden still flourishes that which was the centre of attraction to many of the neighbouring children, for under the ancient mulberry tree Hogarth would gather the little ones and feast them with its luscious fruit. To protect this celebrated tree and prolong its life, stout iron chains



Hogarth House and Mulberry Tree.

support its drooping limbs, and other steps have been taken to arrest decay as far as possible."

A little touch of pathos stays us ere we leave the garden. In one corner stood against the wall a rough and shapeless stone inscribed :—"Alas, poor Dick! 1760, Aged Eleven." Beneath the writing were two cross bones of birds and over these a death's head and a heart. The carving was done by Hogarth himself, and placed there in loving memory of a favourite bullfinch which was buried beneath.

With this must end these brief references to a few of the many interesting

places in our neighbourhood; but, before closing, the reproduction of an old road map out of London, through Acton, may be of interest. The folded scroll, in an ingenious way, brings within the compass of a page an extended system of the roads leading through Middlesex into Buckinghamshire. The quaint spellings of familiar places will be noted, and the various stone, brick, and wooden bridges over brooks and conduits long since disappeared. On the western side of the city is indicated the site of the Lord Mayor's banqueting house, while a little west of "Tiburn" and "Hide" Park are the Kensington "Gravell Pitts" and "Noten barnes" (Notting Hill).

Acton will be seen as the principal village, as it is now the largest town between London and Uxbridge. Directly west of Acton, where we have in succession the towns of Ealing, Hanwell—with its pleasantly situated parish church and tree embowered vicarage—and further along Southall, there are on the map corresponding hamlets with the old time names. The "Ealing Common," which now gives an open and pleasant appearance to this very delightful suburb—recently granted a Charter as a non-county borough—is distinguished as a "pasture."

Westward, past the old town of Uxbridge, once a famous market, this map continues the journey through the district of the Chalfonts, near Jordans, now much frequented by visitors to the cottage home of Milton and to the burial place of William Penn. It appears as if the engraver might have selected as a figure for the plate accompanying the map, the portrait of this eminent Quaker, of whose remarkable life a full and adequate appreciation has yet to be written. Probably it will only be produced when the great principles, for which he sacrificed so much and which exerted such a marked influence on the great English speaking nation west of the Atlantic, are generally recognised and universally adopted by nations, and when peace takes its destined place in the economy of the world.

During the year (1911) the placing by the Pennsylvania Society in the "Oldest Parish Church with a continuous history in the City of London"—that of All Hallows, Barking, at the end of Great Tower Street, E.C.—of a Memorial to William Penn, with the following inscription, is indicative of the more hopeful trend of international thought:—

In Memory of William Penn  
Baptized in this Church October 23rd A.D. 1644  
Proprietary Founder and Governor of  
Pennsylvania  
Exemplar of Brotherhood and Peace  
Lawgiver . . . Lover of Mankind.  
"I shall not usurp the right of any or oppress  
His person. God has furnisht me with a better  
Resolution and has given me His grace to keep it."  
This tablet is erected by  
The Pennsylvania Society of New York, A.D. 1911.

In this, which has been described as the greatest of British interests—peace—Acton itself has not lagged behind. Indeed there are few towns where all sections of the community and all phases of thought have been more thoroughly and unitedly in co-operation or have more heartily led in efforts to promote international goodwill and brotherhood. Thus, desiring not to fail in this practical test of Christianity—a vital adherence to this great fundamental principle of its Founder—Anglicans, Non-conformists, and Roman Catholics have joined to uphold and further this cause. Therein they have been loyal to the great pronouncements of our sovereigns, who have eloquently voiced their desires. King George the Fifth on the 8th November, 1910, said:—"Nothing is dearer to me than the prosperity of my country and the









believe in the power of the Holy Spirit of God to vivify us or vivify in us as Christians, the spirit of Christian Brotherhood under the ever-loving Father in Whom we trust. We want each of the two great nations to have as its centre a solid corps of men and women vivified by the Holy Spirit and the spirit of peace, and we believe that, in that way, we shall bring about what will make the bare possibility of war, and the spread of opinions which give rise to war, first unlikely, then difficult, and ultimately quite impossible. . . . Yesterday, it was my high privilege to introduce to His Majesty the King the two great German guests who are on my right and my left to-day. Need I tell you that nothing could have been more cordial, nothing could have been more hearty, nothing more reciprocal than

the welcome they received for the great cause for which they are here to-day. Before we had that interview with His Majesty the King, we stood side by side, and knelt side by side in the chapel in prayer."

The Acton Town Peace Committee was appointed at a time of considerable international interest, and the first public meeting it arranged was a pronounced success. It was one of the first, if not the pioneer, of the town meetings which were arranged in different parts of the country to welcome the international peace proposals generally known as the Czar's Rescript. In a letter to the press, 26th October, 1898, the Chairman of the Urban District Council, E. F. Hunt, Esq., wrote:—"I have received the requisition, of which a copy is appended. The requisitionists are the ministers and recognised representatives of all the religious denominations in Acton; and in view of this and of the fact that the desirability of holding meetings similar to the one proposed



Old house at "Mary Place," Acton Hill, built in 1588, restored in 1873.

has been warmly advocated by many members of Parliament and divines irrespective of party or creed, I have pleasure in calling a public meeting at the Central Hall, Acton, on Tuesday, 8th Nov. next, at 8 p.m. The admission will be free, and further particulars will in due course be announced by the Committee. I trust that the importance of the question, affecting as it does every human being in the wide world, will be sufficient to induce residents in Acton to attend, and show that they are not unmindful of the request of their ministers and representatives, or of the duty they owe to them and to mankind."

The copy of the requisition addressed to him was as follows:—"To the Chairman of the Urban District Council of Acton. We, the undersigned representatives of religious denominations in Acton, request that you will be pleased to summon a town's meeting, at an early date, to support and pass resolutions in favour of the

Czar's recent proposal for an international conference as to the best means of promoting a universal peace and disarmament among civilised nations. October 20th, 1898.

G. S. de Sausmarez.  
William Bolton.  
Wm. King Baker.  
William A. Davis.  
Samuel Hill.

Alfred C. Strutt.  
S. Barker Simson.  
Bernard Spink.  
T. M. Hayter.  
W. Paton Hindley.

Charles E. Rivers.  
James Oatey.  
Edward Clements.  
Geo. Pratt.

It was a great Meeting: the Hall was packed and the addresses inspiring. These were well reported both locally and by the London press, and from the India Office, Lord George Hamilton, M.P., to whom the Chairman had sent a report of the Meeting, wrote on the 15th November, 1898:—"I have to thank you for your letter of the 12th inst., enclosing a report of a public meeting at which you presided on the 8th November, at the Central Hall, Acton. I fully sympathise

with the sentiments which led the meeting to unanimously adopt a resolution in support of the Czar's proposals for International Disarmament, and I sincerely hope that the deliberations of the Conference may bring us nearer to the desired result."

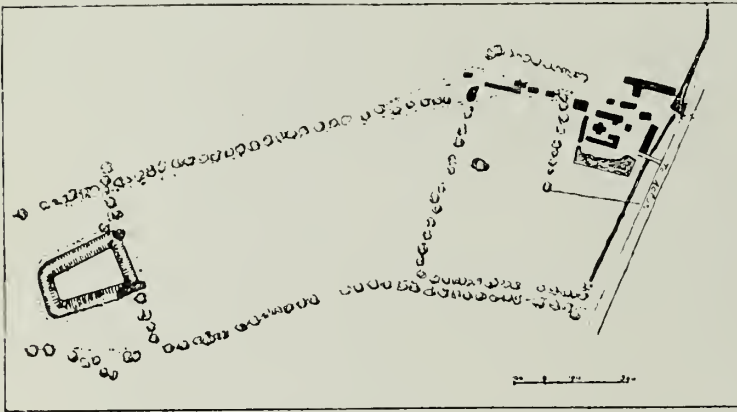
The meeting had more than local influence and was followed by many elsewhere, in the organisation of which Mr. Corrie Grant, then M.P. for Rugby, took an active part. Rev. W. Evans Darby, LL.D. was the principal speaker and

urged the reduction of armaments as a proposal of "the simplest and coldest common sense."

Notwithstanding all deferred hopes, there can be no doubt that amongst the great mass of workers in our own and in other lands this sane, and much to be desired view has, since that time, gained large numbers of adherents.

Another of the great meetings arranged by the Committee at the Central Hall was convened to hear the Rev. Canon Barker give an address on "The Christmas Message of Peace," 31st December, 1900. The chair was occupied by the rector, the Rev. G. S. de Sausmarez, M.A. who pointed out that "public opinion was made up of small units like themselves at that Meeting; and if they and those who might follow them strove to show by their actions that they were the servants of the Prince of Peace, and, as such, were bound to do what they could in the establishment of His Kingdom among men, then a hundred years hence war, as it is ordinarily termed, may not be resorted to by civilised nations."

Canon Barker said: "God coerced no man—He loves, He Commands, He persuades. There was a natural desire of most men, from their natural condition,

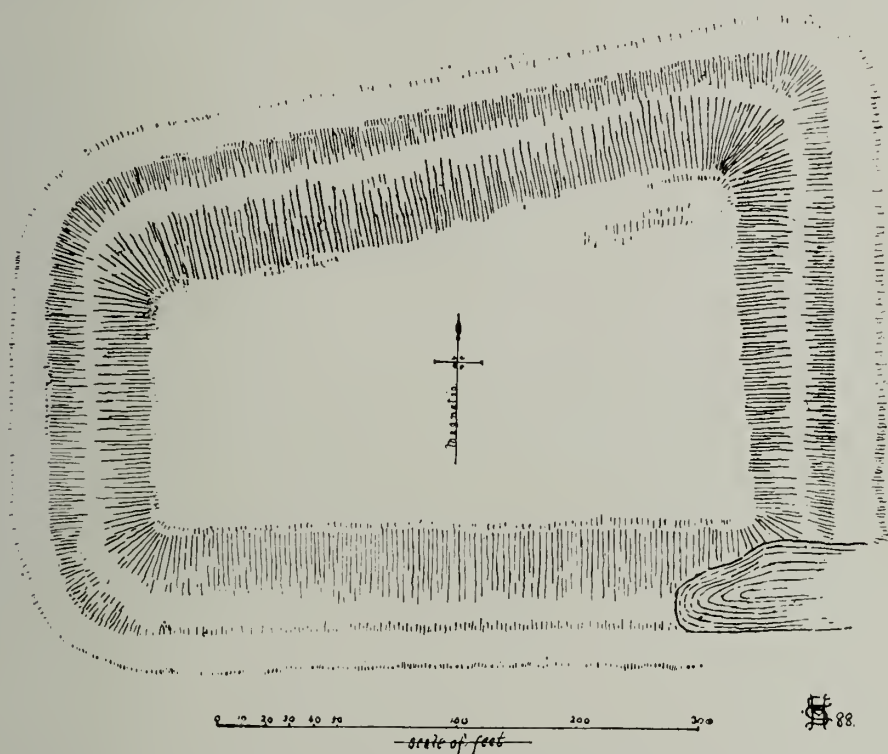


FRIARS PLACE FARM and THE MOATED MEADOW ACTON

Sketched in 1890 for British Archaeological Association, showing Moat in Meadow on the left, and remains of Moat by farm house on the right in Horn Lane, Acton.



to cry in favour of war when it was talked about and proclaimed. The ordinary man wanted something, and if he could obtain that something by force, and had force behind him, his natural desire was to obtain it. When our Lord was not received in a village of the Samaritans His disciples said, 'Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?' Jesus at once settled that question—'Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.' It was said 'Blessed are the peacemakers.' The converse of course, was 'Cursed are the peacemakers.' War was not only anti-christian, but irrational. Force was no remedy. He (Canon Barker) might in an argument be superior to another man, but if his



Larger sketch of Moat made in 1890, with ditch varying from 41 ft. to 60 ft. in width.  
Length of Moat north side, 235 ft.; east 136; south 240 ft.; west 89 ft.

opponent knocked him down it did not prove that his opponent was right. When people went to war, quarrelling, perhaps, about the interpretation of a treaty, about the franchise, or something else, instead of submitting their disputes to arbitrament, they did not settle the question of right or wrong by drawing swords, but only acted as did barbarians. War was barbarism. The only natural force that was permanent was moral force, and the most powerful moral force of all was love; it was absolutely irresistible; no power on earth could compare to it; all forces were dominated by it. Until all men recognised the great teaching of Christianity we should be as we are now, at sixes and sevens." After dwelling upon other aspects of peace, Canon Barker, whose eloquent address lasted about an hour, concluded:

“ God give to you and me the spirit, and the mind, and the heart of the Master, that we may love peace as the angels loved it who sang it on the first Christmas morn ; that we may cherish the highest honour of being called ‘ the children of God,’ because we are ‘ peacemakers ’ ; that we may learn that the sword only destroys and brings reaction, but that the moral forces are the strength of the world ; that God’s promises can never be broken, that truth is invincible, and that the days will come when peace and righteousness will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.”

The Rev. W. Paton Hindley said :— “ They desired to get rid of the idea that war was an absolute necessity, and he agreed that it was a barbarous and most unsatisfactory way of settling differences. He was most absolutely and entirely in sympathy with the meeting, and he rejoiced to see such a gathering, representing, as he had no doubt it did, all classes and conditions of people in the town.”

Various other important gatherings have been held which cannot here be noticed ; but mention may be made of the meeting held at the Acton Hall on the occasion of the visit of the German Pastors to England. Acton had one of the very few Town Meetings which could be organised during their brief visit.



A North Acton Cricket Field, showing the “ Friars ” in background.

E. Monson, Esq., J.P., Chairman of the District Council, presided, and the speakers were the Rev. Hoffmann, D.D. of Stuttgart, Court Preacher to the King of Wurtemberg, the Rev. Pastor Julius Werner of St. Pauls, Frankfort-on-Main, and others. The Chairman welcomed the guests, and the Rev. Wm. Bolton, M.A. said :— “ For years he had been impressed by the thought of the large amount of union possible among Christians who had considerable differences in their thoughts and in the modes of expressing Christian life. Some of the most interesting memories of his own journeys in missionary lands were those of men of many churches and nationalities whose work he had seen, whose friendship he had rejoiced to share, and whose oneness with himself he had felt most clearly. In our own land, and especially in Acton, we were approaching one another much more nearly on lines of philanthropic and religious work. He rejoiced to realise that deeper than any national differences there was a foundation upon which all could meet, and that we helped to form the great harmony of God’s will by the blending and association of our differences. He rejoiced, too, that these kindred nations should be drawn nearer one another.”

And the Rector, Rev. G. S. De Sausmarez, in expressing his great pleasure in this visit of German Pastors added :— “ He hoped they would go back feeling that the heart of England beat with them and that we should have much more of their society in future years. All that we could do to meet and understand one another would tend to peace among the nations and to promote the general cause that they all had at heart.”

Both Dr. Hoffman and Pastor Werner spoke in English. The former in the course of his address said :— “ That day they had made the acquaintance of the English Sunday, that quiet day from which they could learn a good deal in Germany. But if one had not peace in the heart, even the English Sunday could not give him peace. He trusted that between his country and their own there might be such a bridge of peace as that across the Firth of Forth, which they had seen the day before, and that it might stand fast, built upon and grounded upon that peace of God which passeth all understanding.” And Pastor Werner added “ ‘ We need to go through life not merely side by side, but hand in hand, and that we can only do with the help of the Holy Spirit coming down from God as the light



The “Moat ” remains, photographed in 1912, showing road cut across eastern end.

comes down from the sun.’ Husband and wife had as a rule the same tongue and the same language, but they often did not understand one another enough, because they had not the same spirit. We needed that better understanding in the great affairs between nations. Those who talked about peace were sometimes regarded as men with their heads in the clouds. But that was not so ; they had their feet firm on the ground. Peace, rightly understood, was not the outcome of feebleness, but of quiet, conscious strength. Clear-headed, strong-handed men were the men who most liked peace. Real joy came not from external pleasures, but from the satisfaction of the spirit that filled our hearts. Patience must be a condition of real peace in the world. The more they were good peace-loving citizens would they be good Germans and good Englishmen.”

The last town meeting arranged was held last year in support of the cause of International Arbitration, when Mr. Herbert Neild, M.P., who was prevented from attending, wrote expressing his cordial agreement with a Treaty of Arbitration between this country and America. The Chair was taken by Mr. Councillor H. S.



Schultess-Young, Chairman of the District Council, and the principal address was given by Mr. J. Allen Baker, M.P., who called attention to the 143 arbitration treaties ratified since the setting up of the Hague Tribunal. The Rev. C. E. Rivers also gave an able address. These Peace meetings have not only promoted the object for which they were called, but they have banded the churches of Acton together, for causes common to all, in a way that has been mutually helpful.



"Cheviot."

In conclusion, although Acton may not be able to make good the claim that it has ever provided a Royal residence for our sovereigns, and, as already noted, "Norden's reference to Henry III.'s residence really does not belong to us—readers will be interested in a description of the old British-Romano or Saxon moat, situated in what is called the 'moated meadow,' a little west of Friars Place Farm, from the pen of H. Swainson Cowper, Esq., published by the British Archaeological Society in 1890, in which we have the following:—"The site of Henry III.'s mansion or palace is not ascertained; but no one, I believe, has suggested that it was at the 'moated meadow.' If, however, this was, as I have supposed possible, a Saxon residence, it is not unlikely that the same place might be used by the English monarch as a hunting seat, being in easy proximity to London. It would be, most probably, only a wooden house similar to its Saxon predecessor, and in no sense a castle or palace. Acton is never afterwards, I believe, mentioned as a royal residence, so that the place would be suffered to go to decay without ever having borne masonry upon it."

However this may be, we have no mean inheritance. What it is, has been drawn from the large reserve and quiet of a long and honourable past; from the slow growth of thought and purpose through many generations, when our oak forests grew and fell before the axe to build the wooden walls of old England; from the stimulated and awakened independence of life that came through the great heroes of Parliamentary and other times; from the sweet grace that still flows from holy lives and breathes even in the titles of great books, such as Baxter's "Saint's Everlasting Rest."

Nor is it an inheritance from the distant past only, to vanish like the removal of crumbled walls of old manor house and mansion, and the humbler abodes of our great Hale and Baxter: for the pioneer spirit in great causes is an enduring spirit. It has been with us in the building up of splendid modern educational facilities for all classes, in the promotion of temperance and peace, in the active and hearty co-operation of our own with neighbouring authorities and the County Council for the provision of better means of transit and securing parks and open spaces; in the deep conviction of those who have felt that the claims of true citizenship have not been fulfilled in any considerable community until the public library, the hospital, public baths, and other institutions have been provided for the people; and, notwithstanding regrettable incidents which are ever liable to occur, when the personal takes the place of the public spirit, it has lived in the vigorous civic life which has striven to overtake arrears of public service and meet each public need; it is also stirring in the desire for approved schemes of town planning for our remaining unbuilt lands, and for better housing conditions in all parts of our district.

Those who have believed that Acton, hoary with age, has yet a future destined to be still more notable; who believe that greater than the pursuit of any self-interest or sensational prominence, are lives of unselfish devotion to the public service, and unostentatious loyalty to truth; who have faith in the broad sweet spirit of tolerance which leads to kindness of spirit and deepened appreciation of all that is good and noble in whomsoever found—these may take fresh hope from the substantial progress made in many directions in recent years.

If this book serves to bring some of these to mind, and awakens a deepened regard in any for the town and county of their birth or adoption, the labour expended upon it—and it has not been small—will be well repaid. It has involved not a little research to establish what could be proved, to correct some current misconceptions as to our local history, and to bring together under the general subject plan of the book the available materials. Although neither time nor expense has been spared, mistakes and inaccuracies will doubtless be found; and no one can be more sensible than the writer of the added difficulties which attend a work of this kind, when wrought out from the necessarily limited time or leisure permitted by an active business life. It has at least been timely in securing the unusually large number of illustrations, which were obtained none too soon, as already nearly all the old mansions of our neighbourhood have disappeared. Although Acton has few outward memorials of the men of eminence who have been amongst her residents, doubtless somewhat of the charm of the quiet and unpretentious, but very real and earnest life of its people has, in some measure, been a living memorial of these great worthies, who were amongst its people in the generations gone by. And is it not true that the best inheritance which any generation can hand down is the result in character of well-directed effort, not for personal advancement, but for the common good?



THE END.

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" 321	" Torkington	" Torkington House.	"	Springfield Cottage and Stamford Brook	page 266

The full list of portraits of members of the late District Council named above is omitted in this edition. W. J. Boissonnade, E. Monson, and T. H. Morris, see page 269; A. W. W. King, E. F. Hunt, F. A. Baldwin, R. Poulton, and W. J. Amherst, see page 270.

Page 40; The Acton Church plate presented by Lady Dudley is one of twelve sets, probably made for and bestowed upon churches in which she was interested (see *Nineteenth Century Magazine*, June, 1913, page 1334).



















